STRICTURES

ON THE

MODERN SYSTEM

OF

FEMALE EDUCATION.

Domeſtic Happineſs, thou only bliſs
Of Paradiſe that has ſurviv'd the Fall!
Thou art not known where PLEASURE is ador'd,
That reeling Goddeſs with the zoneleſs waiſt.
Forſaking thee, what ſhipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!

COWPER.

The Hope and Expectation of the Time
Should not ſo laviſh of their preſence be,
Nor ſo enfeoff'd to Popularity,
That being nightly ſwallowed by Men's eyes,
They're ſurfeited with honey, and begin
To loathe the taſte of ſweetneſs.

SHAKESPEARE.

BRITISH
12DE72
MUSEUM

Maguire Sc.

Mrs Hannah More

Published by P. Wogan and W. Porter.

STRICTURES

ON THE

MODERN SYSTEM

OF

FEMALE EDUCATION.

WITH

A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT PREVALENT AMONG WOMEN OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

BY HANNAH MORE.

May you so raise your character that you may help to make the next age a better thing, and leave posterity in your debt, for the advantage it shall receive by your example.

LORD HALIFAX.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

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1800.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is a ſingular injuſtice which is often exerciſed towards women, firſt to give them a very defective education, and then to expect from them the moſt undeviating purity of conduct; —to train them in ſuch a manner as ſhall lay them open to the moſt dangerous faults, and then to cenſure them for not proving faultleſs. Is it not unreaſonable and unjuſt, to expreſs diſappointment if our daughters ſhould, in their ſubſequent lives, turn out preciſely that very kind of character for which it would be evident to an unprejudiced by-ſtander that the whole ſcope and tenor of their inſtruction had been ſyſtematically preparing them?

Some reflections on the preſent erroneous ſyſtem are here with great deference ſubmitted to public conſideration. The Author is apprehenſive that we ſhall be accuſed of betraying the intereſts of her ſex by laying open their defects: but ſurely, an earneſt wiſh to turn their attention to objects calculated to promote their true dignity, is not the office of an enemy. So to ex-

poſe the weakneſs of the land as to ſuggeſt the neceſſity of internal improvement, and to point out the means of effectual defence, is not treachery, but patriotiſm.

Again it may be objected to this little work, that many errors are here aſcribed to women which by no means belong to them *excluſively*, and that it ſeems to confine to the ſex thoſe faults which are common to the ſpecies: but this is in ſome meaſure unavoidable. In ſpeaking on the qualities of one ſex, the moraliſt is ſomewhat in the ſituation of the Geographer, who is treating on the nature of one country:—the air, ſoil, and produce of the land which he is deſcribing, cannot fail in many eſſential points to reſemble thoſe of other countries under the ſame parallel; yet it is his buſineſs to deſcant on the one without adverting to the other; and though in drawing his map he may happen to introduce ſome of the neighbouring coaſt, yet his principal attention muſt be confined to that country which he propoſes to deſcribe, without taking into account the reſembling circumſtances of the adjacent ſhores.

It may be alſo objected that the opinion here ſuggeſted on the ſtate of manners among the higher claſſes of our country-women, may ſeem to controvert the juſt encomiums of modern travellers, who generally concur in aſcribing a decided ſuperiority to the ladies of this country over thoſe of every other. But ſuch is the ſtate

of

of foreign manners, that the comparative praiſe is almoſt an injury to *Engliſh* women. To be flattered for excelling thoſe whoſe ſtandard of excellence is very low, is but a degrading kind of commendation; for the value of all praiſe derived from ſuperiority depends on the worth of the competitor. The character of Britiſh ladies, with all the unparalleled advantages they poſſeſs, muſt never be determined by a compariſon with the women of other nations, but by what they themſelves might be if all their talents and unrivalled opportunities were turned to the beſt account.

Again, it may be ſaid, that the Author is leſs diſpoſed to expatiate on excellence than error: but the office of the hiſtorian of human manners is delineation rather than panegyric. Were the end in view eulogium and not improvement, eulogium would have been far more gratifying, nor would juſt objects for praiſe have been difficult to find. Even in her own limited ſphere of obſervation, the Author is acquainted with much excellence in the claſs of which ſhe treats;—with women who, poſſeſſing learning which would be thought extenſive in the other ſex, ſet an example of deep humility to their own;—women who, diſtinguiſhed for wit and genius, are eminent for domeſtic qualities;—who, excelling in the fine arts, have carefully enriched their underſtandings;—who, enjoying great influence, devote it to the glory of God;—who,

poſſeſſing elevated rank, think their nobleſt ſtyle and title is that of a Chriſtian.

That there is alſo much worth which is little known, ſhe is perſuaded; for it is the modeſt nature of goodneſs to exert itſelf quietly, while a few characters of the oppoſite caſt ſeem, by the rumour of their exploits, to fill the world; and by their noiſe to multiply their numbers. It often happens that a very ſmall party of people, by occupying the fore-ground, ſo ſeize the public attention, and monopolize the public talk, that *they* appear to be the great body: and a few active ſpirits, provided their activity take the wrong turn and ſupport the wrong cauſe, ſeem to fill the ſcene; and a few diſturbers of order, who have the talent of thus exciting a falſe idea of their multitudes by their miſchiefs, actually gain ſtrength and ſwell their numbers by this fallacious arithmetic.

But the preſent work is no more intended for a panegyric on thoſe purer characters who ſeek not human praiſe becauſe they act from a higher motive, than for a ſatire on the avowedly licentious, who, urged by the impulſe of the moment, reſiſt no inclination, and, led away by the love of faſhion, diſlike no cenſure, ſo it may ſerve to reſcue them from neglect or oblivion.

There are, however, multitudes of the young and the well-diſpoſed, who have as yet taken no decided part, who are juſt launching on the ocean

ocean of life, juſt about to loſe their own right convictions, virtually preparing to counteract their better propenſities, and unreluctantly yielding themſelves to be carried down the tide of popular practices, ſanguine, thoughtleſs, and confident of ſafety.—To theſe the Author would gently hint, that, when once embarked, it will be no longer eaſy to ſay to their paſſions, or even to their principles, "Thus far ſhall ye go, and no "further." Their ſtruggles will grow fainter, their reſiſtance will become feebler, till borne down by the confluence of example, temptation, appetite, and habit, reſiſtance and oppoſition will ſoon be the only things of which they will learn to be aſhamed.

Should any reader revolt at what is conceived to be unwarranted ſtrictneſs in this little book, let it not be thrown by in diſguſt before the following ſhort conſideration be weighed.——If in this Chriſtian country we are actually beginning to regard the ſolemn office of Baptiſm as merely furniſhing an article to the pariſh regiſter;—if we are learning from our indefatigable Teachers, to conſider this Chriſtian rite as a legal ceremony retained for the ſole purpoſe of recording the *age* of our children;—then, indeed, the prevailing Syſtem of Education and Manners on which this work preſumes to animadvert, may be adopted with propriety and perſiſted in with ſafety, without entailing on our children or on ourſelves the peril of broken promiſes or the guilt

guilt of violated vows.——But, if the obligation which Chriſtian Baptiſm impoſes be really binding;—if the ordinance have, indeed, a meaning beyond a mere ſecular tranſaction, beyond a record of names and dates;—if it be an inſtitution by which the child is ſolemnly devoted to God as his Father, to Jeſus Chriſt as his Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier; if there be no definite period aſſigned when the obligation of fulfilling the duties it enjoins ſhall be ſuperſeded;—if, having once dedicated our offspring to their Creator, we no longer dare to mock Him by bringing them up in ignorance of His Will and neglect of his Laws;—if, after having enliſted them under the banners of Chriſt, to fight manfully againſt the three great enemies of mankind, we are no longer at liberty to let them lay down their arms; much leſs to lead them to act as if they were in alliance inſtead of hoſtility with theſe enemies;—if after having promiſed that they ſhall renounce the vanities of the world, we are not allowed to invalidate the engagement;—if after ſuch a covenant we ſhould tremble to make theſe renounced vanities the ſupreme object of our own purſuit or of *their* inſtruction:—if all this be really ſo, then the Strictures on Modern Education in the firſt part of this work, and on the Habits of poliſhed Life in the ſecond, will not be found ſo repugnant to truth, and reaſon, and common ſenſe, as may on a firſt view be ſuppoſed.

But

But if on candidly ſumming up the evidence, the deſign and ſcope of the Author be fairly judged, not by the cuſtoms or opinions of the worldly, (for every Engliſh ſubject has a right to object to a ſuſpected or prejudiced jury,) but by an appeal to that divine law which is the only infallible rule of judgment; if on ſuch an appeal her views and principles ſhall be found cenſurable for their rigour, abſurd in their requiſitions, or prepoſterous in their reſtrictions, ſhe will have no right to complain of ſuch a verdict, becauſe ſhe will then ſtand condemned by that court to whoſe deciſion ſhe implicitly ſubmits.

Let it not be ſuſpected that the Author arrogantly conceives *herſelf* to be exempt from that natural corruption of the heart which it is one chief object of this ſlight work to exhibit; that ſhe ſuperciliouſly erects herſelf into the impeccable cenſor of her ſex and of the world; as if from the critic's chair ſhe were coldly pointing the faults and errors of another order of beings, in whoſe welfare ſhe had not that lively intereſt which can only flow from the tender and intimate participation of fellow-feeling.

With a deep ſelf-abaſement ariſing from a ſtrong conviction of being indeed a partaker in the ſame corrupt nature; together with a full perſuaſion of the many and great defects of this work, and a ſincere conſciouſneſs of her inability

ability to do juſtice to a ſubject which, however, a ſenſe of duty impelled her to undertake, ſhe commits herſelf to the candour of that Public which has ſo frequently, in her inſtance, accepted a right intention as a ſubſtitute for a powerful performance.

BATH,
March 14, 1799.

STRICTURES

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ON THE

MODERN SYSTEM

OF

FEMALE EDUCATION.

CHAPTER I.

Addreſs to women of rank and fortune, on the effects of their influence on ſociety.—Suggeſtions for the exertion of it in various inſtances.

AMONG the talents for the application of which women of the higher claſs will be peculiarly accountable, there is one, the importance of which they can ſcarcely rate too highly. This talent is influence. We read of the greateſt orator of antiquity, that the wiſeſt plans which it had coſt him years to frame, a woman could overturn in a ſingle day; and when one conſiders

the variety of miſchiefs which an ill-directed influence has been known to produce, one is led to reflect with the moſt ſanguine hope on the beneficial effects to be expected from the ſame powerful force when exerted in its true direction.

The general ſtate of civilized ſociety depends more than thoſe are aware who are not accuſtomed to ſcrutinize into the ſprings of human action, on the prevailing ſentiments and habits of women, and on the nature and degree of the eſtimation in which they are held. Even thoſe who admit the power of female elegance on the manners of men, do not always attend to the influence of female principles on their character. In the former caſe, indeed, women are apt to be ſufficiently conſcious of their power, and not backward in turning it to account. But there are nobler objects to be effected by the exertion of their powers, and unfortunately, ladies, who are often unreaſonably confident where they ought to be diffident, are ſometimes capriciouſly diffident juſt when they ought to feel where their true importance lies; and, feeling, to exert it. To uſe their boaſted power over mankind to no higher purpoſe than the gratification of vanity or the indulgence of pleaſure, is the degrading triumph of thoſe fair victims to luxury, caprice, and deſpotiſm, whom the laws and the religion of the voluptuous prophet of Arabia exclude

clude from light, and liberty, and knowledge; and it is humbling to reflect, that in those countries in which fondness for the mere persons of women is carried to the highest excess, *they are slaves;* and that their moral and intellectual degradation increases in direct proportion to the adoration which is paid to mere external charms.

But I turn to the bright reverse of this mortifying scene; to a country where our sex enjoys the blessings of liberal instruction, of reasonable laws, of a pure religion, and all the endearing pleasures of an equal, social, virtuous, and delightful intercourse: I turn with an earnest hope, that women, thus richly endowed with the bounties of Providence, will not content themselves with polishing, when they are able to reform; with entertaining, when they may awaken; and with captivating for a day, when they may bring into action powers of which the effects may be commensurate with eternity.

In this moment of alarm and peril, I would call on them with a "warning voice," which should stir up every latent principle in their minds, and kindle every slumbering energy in their hearts; I would call on them to come forward, and contribute their full and fair proportion towards the saving of their country. But I would call on them to come forward, without departing from the refinement of their character, without derogating from the dignity of their rank, without blemishing the delicacy of their sex:

ſex : I would call them to the beſt and moſt appropriate exertion of their power, to raiſe the depreſſed tone of public morals, and to awaken the drowſy ſpirit of religious principle. They know too well how arbitrarily they give the law to manners, and with how deſpotic a ſway they fix the ſtandard of faſhion. But this is not enough ; this is a low mark, a prize not worthy of their high and holy calling. For, on the uſe which women of the ſuperior claſs may now be diſpoſed to make of that power delegated to them by the courteſy of cuſtom, by the honeſt gallantry of the heart, by the imperious control of virtuous affections, by the habits of civilized ſtates, by the uſages of poliſhed ſociety ; on the uſe, I ſay, which they ſhall hereafter make of this influence, will depend, in no low degree, the well-being of thoſe ſtates, and the virtue and happineſs, nay perhaps the very exiſtence, of that ſociety.

At this period, when our country can only hope to ſtand by oppoſing a bold and noble *unanimity* to the moſt tremendous confederacies againſt religion, and order, and governments, which the world ever ſaw ; what an acceſſion would it bring to the public ſtrength, could we prevail on beauty, and rank, and talents, and virtue, confederating their ſeveral powers, to exert themſelves with a patriotiſm at once firm and feminine, for the general good ! I am not ſounding an alarm to female warriors, or exciting female

female politicians: I hardly know which of the two is the moſt diſguſting and unnatural character. Propriety is to a woman what the great Roman critic ſays action is to an orator; it is the firſt, the ſecond, the third requiſite. A woman may be knowing, active, witty, and amuſing; but without propriety ſhe cannot be amiable. Propriety is the centre in which all the lines of duty and of agreeableneſs meet. It is to character what proportion is to figure, and grace to attitude. It does not depend on any one perfection, but it is the reſult of general excellence. It ſhews itſelf by a regular, orderly, undeviating courſe; and never ſtarts from its ſober orbit into any ſplendid eccentricities; for it would be aſhamed of ſuch praiſe as it might extort by any aberrations from its proper path. It renounces all commendation but what is characteriſtic; and I would make it the criterion of true taſte, right principle, and genuine feeling, in a woman, whether ſhe would be leſs touched with all the flattery of romantic and exaggerated panegyric than with that beautiful picture of correct and elegant propriety, which Milton draws of our firſt mother, when he delineates

"Thoſe thouſand *decencies* which daily flow
"From all her words and actions."

Even

Even the influence of religion is to be exerciſed with diſcretion. A female Polemic wanders nearly as far from the limits preſcribed to her ſex, as a female Machiavel or warlike Thaleſtris. Fierceneſs has made almoſt as few converts as the ſword, and both are peculiarly ungraceful in a female. Even *religious* violence has human tempers of its own to indulge, and is gratifying itſelf when it would be thought to be ſerving God. Let not the bigot place her natural paſſions to the account of Chriſtianity, or imagine ſhe is pious when ſhe is only paſſionate. Let her bear in mind that a Chriſtian doctrine is always to be defended with a Chriſtian ſpirit, and not make herſelf amends by the ſtoutneſs of her orthodoxy for the badneſs of her temper. Many, becauſe they defend a religious opinion with pertinacity, ſeem to fancy that they thereby acquire a kind of right to withhold the meekneſs and obedience which ſhould be neceſſarily involved in the principle.

But the character of a conſiſtent Chriſtian is as carefully to be maintained, as that of a fiery diſputant is to be avoided; and ſhe who is afraid to avow her principles, or aſhamed to defend them, has little claim to that honorable title. A profligate, who laughs at the moſt ſacred inſtitutions, and keeps out of the way of every thing which comes under the appearance of formal inſtruction, may be diſconcerted by the modeſt, but ſpirited rebuke of a delicate woman, whoſe life adorns the doctrines which her converſation

converſation defends: but ſhe who adminiſters reproof with ill-breeding, defeats the effect of her remedy. On the other hand, there is a diſhoneſt way of labouring to conciliate the favour of a whole company, though of characters and principles irreconcilably oppoſite. The words may be ſo guarded as not to ſhock the believer, while the eye and voice may be ſo accommodated, as not to diſcourage the infidel. She who, with a half earneſtneſs, trims between the truth and the faſhion; who, while ſhe thinks it creditable to defend the cauſe of religion, yet does it in a faint tone, a ſtudied ambiguity of phraſe, and a certain expreſſion in her countenance, which proves that ſhe is not diſpleaſed with what ſhe affects to cenſure, or that ſhe is afraid to loſe her reputation for wit, in proportion as ſhe advances her credit for piety, injures the cauſe more than he who attacked it; for ſhe proves, either that ſhe does not believe what ſhe profeſſes, or that ſhe does not reverence what fear compels her to believe. But this is not all: ſhe is called on, not barely to repreſs impiety, but to excite, to encourage, and to cheriſh every tendency to ſerious religion.

Some of the occaſions of contributing to the general good which are daily preſenting themſelves to ladies, are almoſt too minute to be pointed out. Yet of the good which right-minded women, anxiouſly watching theſe minute occaſions, and adroitly ſeizing them, might accompliſh, we may form ſome idea by the ill-

effects

effects which we actually ſee produced, through the mere levity, careleſsneſs, and inattention (to ſay no worſe) of ſome of thoſe ladies, who are looked up to as ſtandards in the faſhionable world.

I am perſuaded, if many a one, who is now diſſeminating unintended miſchief, under the dangerous notion that there is no harm in any thing ſhort of poſitive vice, and under the falſe colours of that indolent humility, "What good "can *I* do?" could be brought to ſee in its collected force the annual aggregate of the random evil ſhe is daily doing, by conſtantly throwing a *little* caſual weight into the wrong ſcale, by mere inconſiderate and unguarded chat, ſhe would ſtart from her ſelf-complacent dream. If ſhe could conceive how much ſhe may be diminiſhing the good impreſſions of *young* men; and if ſhe could imagine how little amiable levity or irreligion makes her appear in the eyes of thoſe who are older and abler, (however looſe their own principles may be,) ſhe would correct herſelf in the firſt inſtance, from pure good nature; and in the ſecond, from worldly prudence and mere ſelf-love. But on how much higher principles would ſhe reſtrain herſelf, if ſhe habitually took into account the important doctrine of conſequences: and if ſhe reflected that the leſſer but more habitual corruptions make up by their number, what they may ſeem to come ſhort of by their weight: then perhaps ſhe would find that, among the higher claſs of women, *inconſi-*

deration

deration is adding more to the daily quantity of evil than almoſt all other cauſes put together.

There is an inſtrument of inconceivable force, when it is employed againſt the intereſt of Chriſtianity. It is not reaſoning, for that may be anſwered; it is not learning, for luckily the infidel is not ſeldom ignorant; it is not invective, for we leave ſo coarſe an engine to the hands of the vulgar; it is not evidence, for happily we have that all on our ſide: it is RIDICULE, the moſt deadly weapon in the whole arſenal of impiety, and which becomes an almoſt unerring ſhaft when directed by a fair and faſhionable hand. No maxim has been more readily adopted, or is more intrinſically falſe, than that which the faſcinating eloquence of a noble ſceptic of the laſt age contrived to render ſo popular, that "ridicule is the teſt of truth*." It is no teſt of truth itſelf; but of their firmneſs who aſſert the cauſe of truth, it is indeed a ſevere teſt. This light, keen, miſſile weapon, the irreſolute, unconfirmed Chriſtian will find it harder to withſtand, than the whole heavy artillery of infidelity united.

A young man of the better ſort, having juſt entered upon the world, with a certain ſhare of good diſpoſitions and right feelings, not ignorant of the evidences, nor deſtitute of the principles of Chriſtianity; without parting with his reſpect for religion, he ſets out with the too natural wiſh of making himſelf a reputation, and of ſtanding

* Lord Shafteſbury.

ſtanding well with the faſhionable part of the female world. He preſerves for a time a horror of vice, which makes it not difficult for him to reſiſt the groſſer corruptions of ſociety; he can as yet repel profaneneſs; nay, he can withſtand the banter of a club. He has ſenſe enough to ſee through the miſerable fallacies of the new philoſophy, and ſpirit enough to expoſe its malignity. So far he does well, and you are ready to congratulate him on his ſecurity. You are miſtaken: the principles of the ardent, and hitherto promiſing adventurer are ſhaken, juſt in that very ſociety where, while he was looking for pleaſure, he doubted not of ſafety. In the company of certain women of good faſhion and no ill fame, he makes ſhipwreck of his religion. He ſees them treat with levity or deriſion ſubjects which he has been uſed to hear named with reſpect. He could confute an argument, he could unravel a ſophiſtry; but he cannot ſtand a laugh. A ſneer, not at the truth of religion, for that perhaps is by none of the party diſbelieved, but at its gravity, its unſeaſonableneſs, its dulneſs, puts all his reſolution to flight. He feels his miſtake, and ſtruggles to recover his credit; in order to which, he adopts the gay affectation of trying to ſeem worſe than he really is, he goes on to ſay things which he does not believe, and to deny things which he does believe, and all to efface the firſt impreſſion, and to recover a reputation which he has committed to *their* hands on whoſe

whoſe report he knows he ſhall ſtand or fall, in thoſe circles in which he is ambitious to ſhine.

That cold compound of irony, irreligion, ſelfiſhneſs, and ſneer, which make up what the French (from whom we borrow the thing as well as the word) ſo well expreſs by the term *perſiflage*, has of late years made an incredible progreſs in blaſting the opening buds of piety in young perſons of faſhion. A cold pleaſantry, a temporary cant word, the jargon of the day (for the "great vulgar" have their jargon) blights the firſt promiſe of ſerioufneſs. The ladies of *ton* have certain watch-words, which may be detected as indications of this ſpirit. The clergy are ſpoken of under the contemptuous appellation of *The Parſons*. Some ludicrous aſſociation is infallibly combined with every idea of religion. If a warm-hearted youth has ventured to name with enthuſiaſm ſome eminently pious character, his glowing ardour is extinguiſhed with a laugh; and a drawling declaration, that the perſon in queſtion is really a mighty *harmleſs* good creature, is uttered in a tone which leads the youth ſecretly to vow, that whatever elſe he may be, he will never be a good harmleſs creature.

Nor is ridicule more dangerous to true piety than to true taſte. An age which values itſelf on parody, burleſque, irony, and caricature, produces little that is ſublime, either in genius or in virtue; but they *amuſe*, and we live in an age which *muſt* be amuſed, though genius, feeling, truth, and principle, be the ſacrifice. Nothing chills

chills the ardours of devotion like a frigid ſarcaſm: and, in the ſeaſon of youth, the mind ſhould be kept particularly clear of all light aſſociations. This is of ſo much importance that I have known perſons who, having been early accuſtomed to certain ludicrous combinations, were never able to get their minds cleanſed from the impurities contracted by this habitual levity, even after a thorough reformation in their hearts and lives had taken place: their principles became reformed, but their imaginations were indelibly ſoiled. They could deſiſt from ſins which the ſtrictneſs of Chriſtianity would not allow them to commit, but they could not diſmiſs from their minds images, which her purity forbade them to entertain.

There was a time when a variety of epithets were thought neceſſary to expreſs various kinds of excellence, and when the different qualities of the mind were diſtinguiſhed by appropriate and diſcriminating terms; when the words venerable, learned, ſagacious, profound, acute, pious, worthy, ingenious, valuable, elegant, agreeable, wiſe, or witty, were uſed as ſpecific marks of diſtinct characters. But the legiſlators of faſhion have of late years thought proper to compriſe all merit in one eſtabliſhed epithet, and it muſt be confeſſed to be a very deſirable one as far as it goes. This epithet is excluſively and indiſcriminately applied wherever commendation is intended. The word *pleaſant* now ſerves to combine and expreſs all moral and intellectual excellence.

excellence. Every individual, from the graveſt profeſſors of the graveſt profeſſion, down to the trifler who is of no profeſſion at all, muſt earn the epithet of *pleaſant*, or muſt be contented to be nothing; and muſt be conſigned over to ridicule, under the vulgar and inexpreſſive cant word of a *bore*. This is the mortifying deſignation of many a reſpectable man, who, though of much worth and much ability, cannot perhaps clearly make out his letters patent to the title of *pleaſant*. For, according to this modern claſſification, there is no intermediate ſtate, but all are compriſed within the ample bounds of one or other of theſe two terms.

We ought to be more on our guard againſt this ſpirit of ridicule, becauſe, whatever may be the character of the preſent day, its faults do not ſpring from the redundancies of great qualities, or the overflowings of extravagant virtues. It is well if more correct views of life, a more regular adminiſtration of laws, and a more ſettled ſtate of ſociety, have helped to reſtrain the exceſſes of the heroic ages, when love and war were conſidered as the great and ſole buſineſs of human life. Yet, if that period was marked by a romantic extravagance, and the preſent by an indolent ſelfiſhneſs, our ſuperiority is not ſo triumphantly deciſive, as, in the vanity of our hearts, we may be ready to imagine.

I do not wiſh to bring back the frantic reign of chivalry, nor to reinſtate woman in that fantaſtic empire in which they then ſat enthroned in the

the hearts, or rather in the imaginations of men. Common ſenſe is an excellent material of univerſal application, which the ſagacity of latter ages has ſeized upon, and rationally applied to the buſineſs of common life. But let us not forget, in the inſolence of acknowledged ſuperiority, that it was religion and chaſtity, operating on the romantic ſpirit of thoſe times, which eſtabliſhed the deſpotic ſway of woman; and though ſhe now no longer looks down on her adoring votaries, from the pedeſtal to which an abſurd idolatry had lifted her, yet let her remember that it is the ſame religion and the ſame chaſtity which once raiſed her to ſuch an elevation, that muſt ſtill furniſh the nobleſt energies of her character.

While we lawfully ridicule the abſurdities which we have abandoned, let us not plume ourſelves on that ſpirit of novelty which glories in the oppoſite extreme. If the manners of the period in queſtion were affected, and if the gallantry was unnatural, yet the tone of virtue was high; and let us remember that conſtancy, purity, and honour, are not ridiculous in themſelves, though they may unluckily be aſſociated with qualities which are ſo; and woman of delicacy would do well to reflect, when deſcanting on thoſe exploded manners, how far it be decorous to deride with too broad a laugh, attachments which could ſubſiſt on remote gratifications; or groſsly to ridicule the taſte which led the admirer to ſacrifice pleaſure to reſpect, and inclination

to

to honour; to ſneer at that purity which made ſelf-denial a proof of affection, and to call in queſtion the ſound underſtanding of him who preferred the fame of his miſtreſs to his own indulgence.

One cannot but be ſtruck with the wonderful contraſt exhibited to our view, when we contemplate the manners of the two periods in queſtion. In the former, all the flower of Europe ſmit with a delirious gallantry; all that was young, and noble, and brave, and great, with a fanatic frenzy and prepoſterous contempt of danger, traverſed ſeas, and ſcaled mountains, and compaſſed a large portion of the globe, at the expence of eaſe, and fortune, and life, for the unprofitable project of reſcuing, by force of arms, from the hands of infidels, the ſepulchre of that Saviour, whom, *in the other period*, their poſterity would think it the height of fanaticiſm ſo much as to name in good company: whoſe altars they deſert, whoſe temples they neglect; and though in more than one country at leaſt they ſtill call themſelves by his name, yet too many, it is to be feared, contemn his precepts, ſtill more are aſhamed of his doctrines, and not a few reject his ſacrifice. Too many conſider Chriſtianity rather as a political than a religious diſtinction; too many claim the appellation of Chriſtians, in mere oppoſition to that Democracy with which they conceive infidelity to be aſſociated, rather than from an abhorrence of impiety for its own ſake; and dread irreligion as the ſup-

poſed badge of a reprobated party, more than on account of that moral corruption which is its inſeparable concomitant.

On the other hand, in an age when inverſion is the character of the day, the modern idea of improvement does not conſiſt in altering, but extirpating. We do not reform, but ſubvert. We do not correct old ſyſtems, but demoliſh them; fancying that when every thing ſhall be new it will be perfect. Not to have been wrong, but to have been at all, is the crime. Exiſtence is ſin. Excellence is no longer conſidered as an experimental thing which is to grow gradually out of obſervation and practice, and to be improved by the accumulating additions brought by the wiſdom of ſucceſſive ages. *Our wiſdom* is not ſlowly brought by age and gradual growth to perfection, but is a goddeſs which ſtarts at once, full grown, mature, armed cap-à-pee, from the heads of our modern thunderers. Or rather, if I may change the alluſion, a perfect ſyſtem is *now* expected inevitably to ſpring at once, like the fabled bird of Arabia, from the aſhes of its parent; and, like that, can receive its birth no other way but by the deſtruction of its predeceſſor.

Inſtead of clearing away what is redundant, pruning what is cumberſome, ſupplying what is defective, and amending what is wrong, we adopt the indefinite rage for radical reform of Jack, who, in altering Lord Peter's * coat, ſhewed his zeal

* Swift's "Tale of a Tub."

zeal by crying out, "Tear away, brother Mar-
"tin, for the love of heaven; never mind, ſo
"you do but tear away."

This tearing ſyſtem has unqueſtionably rent away ſome valuable parts of that ſtrong, rich, native ſtuff, which formed the ancient texture of Britiſh manners. That we have gained much I am perſuaded; that we have loſt nothing I dare not therefore affirm. But though it fairly exhibits a mark of our improved judgment to ridicule the fantaſtic notions of love and honour in the heroic ages; let us not rejoice that that ſpirit of generoſity in ſentiment, and of ardour in piety, the exuberancies of which were then ſo inconvenient, are now ſunk as unreaſonably low. That revolution of manners which the unparalleled wit and genius of Don Quixote ſo happily effected, by aboliſhing extravagancies the moſt abſurd and pernicious, was ſo far imperfect, that ſome virtues which he never meant to expoſe, fell into diſrepute with the abſurdities which he did: and it is become the turn of the preſent taſte to attach in no ſmall degree that which is ridiculous to that which is ſerious and heroic. Some modern works of wit have aſſiſted in bringing piety and ſome of the nobleſt virtues into contempt, by ſtudiouſly aſſociating them with oddity, childiſh ſimplicity, and ignorance of the world: and unneceſſary pains have been taken to extinguiſh that zeal and ardour, which, however liable to exceſs and error, are yet the ſpring of whatever is great and excellent in the human

character. The novel of Cervantes is incomparable; the Tartuffe of Moliere is unequalled; but true generoſity and true religion will never loſe any thing of their intrinſic value, becauſe knight-errantry and hypocriſy are legitimate objects for ſatire.

But to return from this too long digreſſion, to the ſubject of female influence. Thoſe who have not watched the united operation of vanity and feeling on a youthful mind, will not conceive how much leſs formidable the ridicule of all his own ſex will be to a very young man, than that of thoſe women to whom he has been taught to look up as the arbitreſſes of elegance. Such an one, I doubt not, might be able to work himſelf up, by the force of genuine Chriſtian principles, to ſuch a pitch of true heroiſm, as to refuſe a challenge, (and it requires more real courage to refuſe a challenge than to accept one,) who would yet be in danger of relapſing into the dreadful puſillanimity of the world, when he is told that no woman of faſhion will hereafter look on him but with contempt. While we have cleared away the rubbiſh of the Gothic ages, it were to be wiſhed we had not retained the moſt criminal of all their inſtitutions. Why chivalry ſhould indicate a madman, while its leading object, the *ſingle combat*, ſhould deſignate a gentleman, has not yet been explained. Nay the original motive is loſt, while the ſinful practice is continued; for the fighter of the duel no longer *pretends* to be a glorious redreſſer of the wrongs

wrongs of ſtrangers; no longer conſiders himſelf as piouſly appealing to heaven for the juſtice of his cauſe; but from the ſlaviſh fear of unmerited reproach, often ſelfiſhly hazards the happineſs of his neareſt connections, and always comes forth in direct defiance of an acknowledged command of the Almighty. Perhaps there are few occaſions in which female influence might be exerted to a higher purpoſe than in this, in which laws and conſcience have hitherto effected ſo little. But while the duelliſt (who perhaps becomes a duelliſt only becauſe he was firſt a ſeducer) is welcomed with ſmiles; the more hardy youth, who, not becauſe he fears man but God, declines a challenge; who is reſolved to brave diſgrace rather than commit ſin, would be treated with cool contempt by thoſe very perſons to whoſe eſteem he might reaſonably look, as one of the rewards of his true and ſubſtantial fortitude.

How then is it to be reconciled with the deciſions of principle, that delicate women ſhould receive with complacency the ſucceſsful libertine, who has been detected by the wretched father or the injured huſband in a criminal commerce, the diſcovery of which has too juſtly baniſhed the unhappy partner of his crime from virtuous ſociety? Nay, if he happen to be very handſome, or very brave, or very faſhionable, is there not ſometimes a kind of diſhonorable competition for his favour? But, whether his popularity be derived from birth, or parts, or perſon, or

(what is often a ſubſtitute for all) from his having made his way into *good company*, women of diſtinction ſully the ſanctity of virtue by the too viſible pleaſure they ſometimes expreſs at the attentions of ſuch a popular libertine, whoſe voluble ſmall-talk they admire, and whoſe ſprightly nothings they quote, and whom perhaps their very favour tends to prevent from becoming a better character, becauſe he finds himſelf more acceptable as he is.

May I be allowed to introduce a new part of my ſubject, by remarking that it is a matter of inconceivable importance, though not perhaps ſufficiently conſidered, when any popular work, not on a religious topic, but on any common ſubject, ſuch as politics, hiſtory, or ſcience, has happened to be written by an author of ſound Chriſtian principles? It may not have been neceſſary, nor prudently practicable, to have a ſingle page in the whole work profeſſedly religious: but ſtill, when the living principle informs the mind of the writer, it is almoſt impoſſible but that ſomething of its ſpirit will diffuſe itſelf even into ſubjects with which it ſhould ſeem but remotely connected. It is at leaſt a comfort to the reader, to feel that honeſt confidence which reſults from knowing that he has put himſelf into ſafe hands; that he has committed himſelf to an author, whoſe known principles are a pledge that his reader need not be driven to watch himſelf at every ſtep with anxious circumſpection; that he need not be looking on the right hand

and

and on the left, as if he knew there were pitfalls under the flowers which are delighting him. And it is no ſmall point gained, that on ſubjects in which you do not look to *improve* your religion, it is at leaſt ſecured from deterioration. If the Athenian laws were ſo delicate that they diſgraced any one who ſhewed an inquiring traveller the wrong road, what diſgrace, among Chriſtians, ſhould attach to that author, who, when a youth is inquiring the road to hiſtory or philoſophy, directs him to blaſphemy and unbelief?

In animadverting farther on the reigning evils which the times more particularly demand that woman of rank and influence ſhould repreſs, Chriſtianity calls upon them to bear their decided teſtimony againſt every thing which is notoriouſly contributing to the public corruption. It calls upon them to baniſh from their dreſſing-rooms, (and oh, that their influence could baniſh from the libraries of their ſons and huſbands!) that ſober and unſuſpected maſs of miſchief, which, by aſſuming the plauſible names of Science, of Philoſophy, of Arts, of Belles Lettres, is gradually adminiſtering death to the principles of thoſe who would be on their guard, had the poiſon been labelled with its own pernicious title. Avowed attacks upon revelation are more eaſily reſiſted, becauſe the malignity is advertiſed. But who ſuſpects the deſtruction which lurks under the harmleſs or inſtructive names of *General Hiſtory*, *Natural Hiſtory*, *Travels*,

vels, Voyages, Lives, Encyclopedias, Criticiſm, and Romance? Who will deny that many of theſe works contain much admirable matter; brilliant paſſages, important facts, juſt deſcriptions, faithful pictures of nature, and valuable illuſtrations of ſcience? But while "the dead fly lies at the "bottom," the whole will exhale a corrupt and peſtilential ſtench.

Novels, which chiefly uſed to be dangerous in one reſpect, are now become miſchievous in a thouſand. They are continually ſhifting their ground, and enlarging their ſphere, and are daily becoming vehicles of wider miſchief. Some times they concentrate their force, and are at once employed to diffuſe deſtructive politics, deplorable profligacy, and impudent infidelity. Rouſſeau was the firſt popular diſpenſer of this complicated drug, in which the deleterious infuſion was ſtrong, and the effect proportionably fatal. For he does not attempt to ſeduce the affections but through the medium of the principles. He does not paint an innocent woman, ruined, repenting, and reſtored; but with a far more miſchievous refinement, he annihilates the value of chaſtity, and with pernicious ſubtlety attempts to make his heroine appear almoſt more amiable without it. He exhibits a virtuous woman, the victim not of temptation but of reaſon, not of vice but of ſentiment, not of paſſion but of conviction; and ſtrikes at the very root of honour by elevating a crime into a principle. With a metaphyſical ſophiſtry the moſt plauſible, he

he debauches the heart of woman, by cheriſhing her vanity in the erection of a ſyſtem of male virtues, to which, with a lofty dereliction of thoſe that are her more peculiar and characteriſtic praiſe, he tempts her to aſpire; powerfully inſinuating, that to this ſplendid ſyſtem chaſtity does not neceſſarily belong: thus corrupting the judgment and bewildering the underſtanding, as the moſt effectual way to inflame the imagination and deprave the heart.

The rare miſchief of this author conſiſts in his power of ſeducing by falſehood thoſe who love truth, but whoſe minds are ſtill wavering, and whoſe principles are not yet formed. He allures the warm-hearted to embrace vice, not becauſe they prefer vice, but becauſe he gives to vice ſo natural an air of virtue: and ardent and enthuſiaſtic youth, too confidently truſting in their integrity and in their teacher, will be undone, while they fancy they are indulging in the nobleſt feelings of their nature. Many authors will more infallibly complete the ruin of the looſe and ill-diſpoſed; but perhaps (if I may change the figure) there never was a net of ſuch exquiſite art and inextricable workmanſhip, ſpread to entangle innocence and enſnare inexperience, as the writings of Rouſſeau: and, unhappily, the victim does not even ſtruggle in the toils, becauſe part of the deluſion conſiſts in imagining that he is ſet at liberty.

Some of our recent popular publications have adopted and enlarged all the miſchiefs of this ſchool,

ſchool, and the principal evil ariſing from them is, that the virtues they exhibit are almoſt more dangerous than the vices. The chief materials out of which theſe deluſive ſyſtems are framed, are characters who practiſe ſuperfluous acts of generoſity, while they are trampling on obvious and commanded duties; who combine inflated ſentiments of honour with actions the moſt flagitious; a high tone of ſelf-confidence, with a perpetual neglect of ſelf-denial: pathetic apoſtrophes to the paſſions, but no attempt to reſiſt them. They teach, that chaſtity is only individual attachment; that no duty exiſts which is not prompted by feeling; that impulſe is the main ſpring of virtuous actions, while laws and religion are only unjuſt reſtraints; the former impoſed by arbitrary men, the latter by the abſurd prejudices of timorous and unenlightened conſcience. Alas! they do not know that the beſt creature of impulſe that ever lived is but a wayward, unfixed, unprincipled being! that the beſt *natural* man requires a curb; and needs that balance to the affections which Chriſtianity alone can furniſh, and without which benevolent propenſities are no ſecurity to virtue. And perhaps it is not too much to ſay, in ſpite of the monopoly of benevolence to which the new philoſophy lays claim, that the *human* duties of the ſecond table have never once been well performed by any of the rejectors of that previous portion of the Decalogue which enjoins duty to *God*.

In

In ſome of the moſt ſplendid of theſe characters compaſſion is erected into the throne of juſtice, and juſtice degraded into the rank of plebeian virtues. Creditors are defrauded, while the money due to them is laviſhed in dazzling acts of charity to ſome object that affects the ſenſes; which paroxyſms of charity are made the ſponge of every ſin, and the ſubſtitute of every virtue: the whole indirectly tending to intimate how very *benevolent people are who are not Chriſtians.* From many of theſe compoſitions, indeed, Chriſtianity is ſyſtematically, and always virtually, excluded; for the law, and the prophets, and the goſpel *can* make no part of a ſcheme in which this world is looked upon as all in all; in which want and miſery are conſidered as evils ariſing ſolely from human governments, and not from the diſpenſations of God; in which poverty is repreſented as merely a political evil, and the reſtraints which tend to keep the poor honeſt, are painted as the moſt flagrant injuſtice. The goſpel *can* make no part of a ſyſtem in which the chimerical project of conſummate earthly happineſs (founded on the mad pretence of loving the poor better than God loves them) would defeat the divine plan, which meant this world a ſcene of diſcipline, not of remuneration. The goſpel *can* have nothing to do with a ſyſtem in which ſin is reduced to a little human imperfection, and Old Bailey crimes are ſoftened down into a few engaging weakneſſes; and in which the turpitude of all the vices a man himſelf

commits, is done away by his *candour* in tolerating all the vices committed by others.

But the part of the ſyſtem the moſt fatal to that claſs whom I am addreſſing is, that even in thoſe works which do not go all the length of treating marriage as an unjuſt infringement on liberty, and a tyrannical deduction from general happineſs; yet it commonly happens that the hero or heroine, who has practically violated the letter of the ſeventh commandment, and continues to live in the allowed violation of its ſpirit, is painted as ſo amiable and ſo benevolent, ſo tender or ſo brave; and the temptation is repreſented as ſo *irreſiſtible*, (for all theſe philoſophers are fataliſts,) the predominant and cheriſhed ſin is ſo filtered and defecated of its pollutions, and is ſo ſheltered and ſurrounded, and relieved with ſhining qualities, that the innocent and impreſſible young reader is brought to loſe all horror of the awful crime in queſtion, in the complacency ſhe feels for the engaging virtues of the criminal.

But there is another object to which I would direct the exertion of that power of female influence of which I am ſpeaking. Thoſe ladies who take the lead in ſociety are loudly called upon to act as the guardians of the public taſte as well as of the public virtue. They are called upon, therefore, to oppoſe with the whole weight of their influence, the irruption of thoſe ſwarms of publications now daily iſſuing from the banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging predeceſſors of the darker ages, though with far

other

other arms, are overrunning civilized ſociety. Thoſe readers, whoſe purer taſte has been formed on the correct models of the old claſſic ſchool, ſee with indignation and aſtoniſhment the Huns and Vandals once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans. They behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid motion, hurried back to the reign of "chaos and old night," by diſtorted and unprincipled compoſitions, which unite the taſte of the Goths with the morals of Bagſhot*,

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire!

Theſe compoſitions terrify the weak, and diſguſt the diſcerning, by wild and misſhapen ſuperſtitions, in which, with that *conſiſtency* which forms ſo ſtriking a feature of the new philoſophy, thoſe who moſt earneſtly deny the immortality of the ſoul are moſt eager to introduce the machinery of ghoſts.

The writings of the French infidels were ſome years ago circulated in England with uncommon induſtry, and with ſome effect: but the plain ſenſe and good principles of the far greater part of our countrymen reſiſted the attack, and roſe ſuperior to the trial. Of the doctrines and principles here alluded to, the dreadful conſequences, not only in the unhappy country where they originated and were almoſt univerſally adopted, but in

* The newſpapers announce that Schiller's Tragedy of the Robbers, which inflamed the young nobility of Germany to enliſt themſelves into a band of highwaymen to rob in the foreſts of Bohemia, is *now acting in England by perſons of quality!*

in every part of Europe where they have been received, have been ſuch as to ſerve as a beacon to ſurrounding nations, if any warning can preſerve them from deſtruction. In this country the ſubject is now ſo well underſtood, that every thing that iſſues from the *French* preſs is received with jealouſy: and a work, on the firſt appearance of its exhibiting the doctrines of Voltaire and his aſſociates, is rejected with indignation.

But let us not on account of this victory repoſe in confident ſecurity. The modern apoſtles of infidelity and immorality, little leſs indefatigable in diſperſing their pernicious doctrines than the firſt apoſtles were in propagating goſpel truths, have indeed changed their weapons, but they have by no means deſiſted from the attack. To deſtroy the principles of Chriſtianity in this iſland, appears at the preſent moment to be their grand aim. Deprived of the aſſiſtance of the French preſs, they are now attempting to attain their object under the cloſe and more artificial veil of German literature. Conſcious that religion and morals will ſtand or fall together, their attacks are ſometimes levelled againſt the one, and ſometimes againſt the other. With ſtrong occaſional profeſſions of general attachment to both of theſe, they endeavour to intereſt the feelings of the reader, ſometimes in favour of ſome one particular vice, at other times on the ſubject of ſome one objection to revealed religion. Poetry as well as proſe, romance as well as hiſtory, writings on philoſophical as well

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as on political ſubjects, have thus been employed to inſtil the principles of *Illuminatiſm*, while incredible pains have been taken to obtain able tranſlations of every book which was ſuppoſed likely to be of uſe in corrupting the heart or miſleading the underſtanding. In many of theſe tranſlations, certain bolder paſſages, which, though well received in Germany, would have excited diſguſt in England, are wholly omitted, in order that the mind may be more certainly, though more ſlowly, prepared for the full effect of the ſame poiſon to be adminiſtered in a ſtronger degree at another period.

Let not thoſe to whom theſe pages are addreſſed deceive themſelves by ſuppoſing this to be a fable; and let them inquire moſt ſeriouſly whether I ſpeak truth, in aſſerting that the attacks of infidelity in Great Britain are at this moment principally directed againſt the female breaſt. Conſcious of the influence of women in civil ſociety, conſcious of the effect which female infidelity produced in France, they attribute the ill-ſucceſs of their attempts in this country, to their having been hitherto chiefly addreſſed to the male ſex. They are now ſedulouſly labouring to deſtroy the religious principles of women, and in too many inſtances have fatally ſucceeded. For this purpoſe, not only novels and romances have been made the vehicles of vice and infidelity, but the ſame allurement has been held out to the women of our country, which was employed by the firſt philoſophiſt to the firſt

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ſinner—Knowledge. Liſten to the precepts of the new German enlighteners, and you need no longer remain in that ſituation in which Providence has placed you! Follow their examples, and you ſhall be permitted to indulge in all thoſe gratifications which cuſtom, not religion, has tolerated in the male ſex!

Let us jealouſly watch every deepening ſhade in the change of manners; let us mark every ſtep, however inconſiderable, whoſe tendency is downwards. Corruption is neither ſtationary nor retrograde; and to have departed from modeſty, is already to have made a progreſs. It is not only awfully true, that ſince the new principles have been afloat, *women* have been too eagerly inquiſitive after theſe monſtrous compoſitions; but it is true alſo that, with a new and offenſive renunciation of their native delicacy, *many women of character* make little heſitation in avowing their familiarity with works abounding with principles, ſentiments, and deſcriptions, "which ſhould not be ſo much as named among "them." By allowing their minds to come in contact with ſuch contagious matter, they are irrecoverably tainting them; and by acknowledging that they are actually converſant with ſuch corruptions, (with whatever reprobation of the author they may qualify their peruſal of the book,) they are exciting in others a moſt miſchievous curioſity for the ſame unhallowed gratification. Thus they are daily diminiſhing in the young and the timid thoſe wholeſome ſcruples,

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by which, when a tender conſcience ceaſes to be intrenched, all the ſubſequent ſtages of ruin are gradually facilitated.

We have hitherto ſpoken only of the German *writings*; but becauſe there are multitudes who ſeldom read, equal pains have been taken to promote the ſame object through the medium of the ſtage: and this weapon is, of all others, that againſt which it is, at the preſent moment, the moſt important to warn the more inconſiderate of my countrywomen.

As a ſpecimen of the German drama, it may not be unſeaſonable to offer a few remarks on the admired play of the *Stranger*. In this piece the character of an *adultreſs*, which, in all periods of the world, ancient as well as modern, in all countries, heathen as well as chriſtian, has hitherto been held in deteſtation, and has never been introduced but to be reprobated, is for the firſt time preſented to our view in the moſt pleaſing and faſcinating colours. The heroine is a woman who forſook a huſband the moſt affectionate and the moſt amiable, and lived for ſome time in the moſt criminal commerce with her ſeducer. Repenting at length of her crime, ſhe buries herſelf in retirement. The talents of the poet during the whole piece are exerted in attempting to render this woman the object not only of the compaſſion and forgiveneſs, but of the eſteem and affection of the audience. The injured huſband, convinced of his wife's repentance, forms a reſolution, which every man

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of true feeling and chriſtian piety will probably approve. He forgives her offence, and promiſes her through life his advice, protection, and fortune, together with every thing which can alleviate the miſery of her ſituation, but refuſes, to replace her in the ſituation of his wife. But this is not ſufficient for the *German* author. His efforts are employed, and it is to be feared but too ſucceſsfully, in making the audience conſider the huſband as an unrelenting ſavage, while they are led by the art of the poet anxiouſly to wiſh to ſee an adultreſs reſtored to that rank of women who have not violated the moſt ſolemn covenant that can be made with man, nor diſobeyed one of the moſt poſitive laws which has been enjoined by God.

About the ſame time that this firſt attempt at repreſenting an adultreſs in an exemplary light was made by a German dramatiſt, which forms an æra in manners; a direct vindication of adultery was for the firſt time attempted by a *woman*, a profeſſed admirer and imitator of the German ſuicide Werter. *The Female Werter*, as ſhe is ſtyled by her biographer, aſſerts, in a work intitled "The Wrongs of Women," that adultery is juſtifiable, and that the reſtrictions placed on it by the laws of England conſtitute one of the *Wrongs of Women*.

And this leads me to dwell a little longer on this moſt deſtructive claſs in the whole wide range of modern corruptors, who effect the moſt

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deſperate work of the paſſions, without ſo much as pretending to urge their violence in extenuation of the guilt of indulging them. They ſolicit this very indulgence with a ſort of cold-blooded ſpeculation, and invite the reader to the moſt unbounded gratifications, with all the ſaturnine coolneſs of a geometrical calculation. Theirs is an iniquity rather of phlegm than of ſpirit: and in the peſtilent atmoſphere they raiſe about them, as in the infernal climate deſcribed by Milton,

The parching air*
Burns frore, and froſt performs th' effect of fire.

This cool, calculating, intellectual wickedneſs eats out the very heart and core of virtue, and like a deadly mildew blights and ſhrivels the blooming promiſe of the human ſpring. Its benumbing touch communicates a torpid ſluggiſhneſs which paralyzes the ſoul. It deſcants on depravity as gravely, and details its groſſeſt acts as frigidly, as if its object were to *allay* the tumult of the paſſions, while it is letting them looſe on mankind, by "plucking off the muzzle" of preſent reſtraint and future accountableneſs. The ſyſtem is a dire infuſion compounded of bold

* "When the north-wind bloweth, it devoureth the "mountains, and burneth the wilderneſs, and conſumeth "the graſs as fire." Eccluſ. xl. 20.

bold impiety, brutiſh ſenſuality, and exquiſite folly, which creeping fatally about the heart, checks the moral circulation, and totally ſtops the pulſe of goodneſs by the extinction of the vital principle. Thus not only choaking the ſtream of actual virtue, but drying up the very fountain of future remorſe and remote repentance.

The ravages which ſome of the old offenders againſt purity made in the youthful heart, by the exerciſe of a fervid but licentious imagination on the paſſions, was like the miſchief effected by floods, cataracts, and volcanos. The deſolation indeed was terrible, and the ruin was tremendous: yet it was a ruin which did not *infallibly* preclude the poſſibility of recovery. The country, though deluged and devaſtated, was not utterly put beyond the power of reſtoration. The harveſts indeed were deſtroyed, and all was wide ſterility. But, though the crops were loſt, the *ſeeds* of vegetation were not abſolutely eradicated; ſo that, after a long and barren blank, fertility *might* finally return.

But the heart once infected with this newly medicated venom, ſubtil though ſluggiſh in its operation, reſembles what travellers relate of that blaſted ſpot the dead ſea, where thoſe devoted cities once ſtood which for their pollutions were burnt with fire from heaven. It continues a ſtagnant lake of putrifying waters. No whole-

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ſome blade ever more ſhoots up; the air is ſo tainted that no living thing ſubſiſts within its influence. Near the ſulphureous pool the very principle of life is annihilated.—All is death,

Death, unrepealable, eternal death!

But let us take comfort. Theſe projects are not yet generally realiſed. Theſe atrocious principles are not yet adopted into common practice. Though corruptions ſeem with a confluent tide to be pouring in upon us from every quarter, yet there is ſtill left among us a diſcriminating judgment. Clear and ſtrongly marked diſtinctions between right and wrong ſtill ſubſiſt. While we continue to cheriſh this ſanity of mind, the caſe is not deſperate. Though that crime, the growth of which always exhibits the moſt irrefragable proof of the diſſoluteneſs of public manners; though that crime, which cuts up order and virtue by the roots, and violates the ſanctity of vows, is awfully increaſing,

'Till ſenates ſeem,
For purpoſes of empire leſs conven'd
Than to releaſe the adult'reſs from her bonds;

yet, thanks to the ſurviving efficacy of a holy religion, to the operation of virtuous laws, and to the energy and unſhaken integrity with which

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theſe laws are *now* adminiſtered; and, moſt of all perhaps, to a ſtandard of morals which continues in force, when the principles which ſanctioned it are no more; this crime, in the female ſex at leaſt, is ſtill held in juſt abhorrence; if it be practiſed, it is not honourable; if it be committed, it is not juſtified; we do not yet affect to palliate its turpitude; as yet it hides its abhorred head in lurking privacy; and reprobation *hitherto* follows its publicity.

But on YOUR exerting your influence, with juſt application and increaſing energy, may in no ſmall degree depend whether this corruption ſhall ſtill continue to be reſiſted. For, from admiring to adopting, the ſtep is ſhort, and the progreſs rapid; and it is in the moral as in the natural world; the motion, in the caſe of minds as well as of bodies, is accelerated as they approach the centre to which they are tending.

O ye to whom this addreſs is particularly directed! an awful charge is, in this inſtance, committed to your hands; as you diſcharge it or ſhrink from it, you promote or injure the honour of your daughters and the happineſs of your ſons, of both which you are the depoſitaries. And, while you reſolutely perſevere in making a ſtand againſt the encroachments of this crime, ſuffer not your firmneſs to be ſhaken by that affectation of charity which is growing into a general ſubſtitute for principle. Abuſe

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not ſo noble a quality as Chriſtian candour, by miſemploying it in inſtances to which it does not apply. Pity the wretched woman you dare not countenance: and bleſs HIM who has "made "you to differ." If unhappliy ſhe be your relation or friend, anxiouſly watch for the period when ſhe ſhall be deſerted by her betrayer; and ſee if, by your Chriſtian offices, ſhe can be ſnatched from a perpetuity of vice. But if, through the Divine bleſſing on your patient endeavours, ſhe ſhould ever be awakened to remorſe, be not anxious to reſtore the forlorn penitent to that ſociety againſt whoſe laws ſhe has ſo grievouſly offended; and remember, that her ſoliciting ſuch a reſtoration, furniſhes but too plain a proof that ſhe is not the penitent your partiality would believe; ſince penitence is more anxious to make its peace with Heaven than with the world. Joyfully would a truly contrite ſpirit commute an earthly for an everlaſting reprobation! To reſtore a criminal to public ſociety, is perhaps to tempt her to repeat her crime, or to deaden her repentance for having committed it, as well as to injure that ſociety; while to reſtore a ſtrayed ſoul to God will add luſtre to your Chriſtian character, and brighten your eternal crown.

In the mean time, there are other evils, ultimately perhaps tending to this, into which we

are falling, through that ſort of faſhionable candour which, as was hinted above, is among the miſchievous characteriſtics of the preſent day; of which period perhaps it is not the ſmalleſt evil, that vices are made to look ſo like virtues, and are ſo aſſimilated to them, that it requires watchfulneſs and judgment ſufficiently to analyze and diſcriminate. There are certain women of good faſhion who practiſe irregularities not conſiſtent with the ſtrictneſs of virtue; while their good ſenſe and knowledge of the world make them at the ſame time keenly alive to the value of reputation. They want to retain their indulgences, without quite forfeiting their credit; but finding their fame faſt declining, they artfully cling, by flattery and marked attentions, to a few perſons of more than ordinary character; and thus, till they are driven to let go their hold, continue to prop a falling fame.

On the other hand, there are not wanting women of diſtinction, of very correct general conduct, and of no ordinary ſenſe and virtue, who, confiding with a high mind on what they too confidently call *the integrity of their own hearts;* anxious to deſerve a good fame on the one hand, by a life free from reproach, yet ſecretly too deſirous on the other of ſecuring a worldly and faſhionable reputation; while their general aſſociates are perſons of honour, and their general reſort places of ſafety; yet allow themſelves

themſelves to be occaſionally preſent at the midnight orgies of revelry and gaming, in houſes of no honourable eſtimation; and thus help to keep up characters, which, without their ſuſtaining hand, would ſink to their juſt level of contempt and reprobation. While they are holding out this plank to a drowning reputation, rather, it is to be feared, ſhewing their own ſtrength than aſſiſting another's weakneſs, they value themſelves, perhaps, on not partaking of the worſt parts of the amuſements which may be carrying on; but they ſuch ſanction them by their preſence; they lend their countenance to corruptions they ſhould abhor, and their example to the young and inexperienced, who are looking about for ſome ſanction to juſtify them in that to which they were before inclined, but were too timid to have ventured upon without the protection of ſuch unſullied names. Thus theſe reſpectable characters, without looking to the general conſequences of their indiſcretion, are thoughtleſsly employed in breaking down, as it were, the broad fence which ſhould ever ſeparate two very different ſorts of ſociety, and are becoming a kind of unnatural link between vice and virtue.

There is a groſs deception which even perſons of reputation practiſe on themſelves. They loudly condemn vice and irregularity as an abſtract principle; nay, they ſtigmatize them

them in perſons of an oppoſite party, or in thoſe from whom they themſelves have no proſpect of perſonal advantage or amuſement, and in whom therefore they have no particular intereſt to tolerate evil. But the ſame diſorders are viewed without abhorrence when practiſed by thoſe who in any way miniſter to *their* pleaſures. Refined entertainments, luxurious decorations, ſelect muſic, whatever furniſhes any delight rare and exquiſite to the ſenſes, theſe ſoften the ſeverity of criticiſm; theſe palliate ſins, varniſh over the flaws of a broken character, and extort not pardon merely, but juſtification, countenance, intimacy! The more reſpectable will not, perhaps, go all the length of vindicating the diſreputable vice, but they affect to diſbelieve its exiſtence in the individual inſtance; or, failing in this, they will bury its acknowledged turpitude in the ſeducing qualities of the agreeable delinquent. Talents of every kind are conſidered as a commutation for a few vices; and ſuch talents are made a paſſport to introduce into honourable ſociety characters whom their profligacy ought to exclude from it.

But the great object to which YOU, who are or may be mothers, are more eſpecially called, is the education of your children. If we are reſponſible for the uſe of influence in the caſe of thoſe over whom we have no immediate control, in the caſe of

of our children we are reſponſible for the exerciſe of acknowledged *power:* a power wide in its extent, indefinite in its effects, and ineſtimable in its importance. On YOU, depend in no ſmall degree the principles of the whole riſing generation. To your direction the daughters are almoſt excluſively committed; and until a certain age, to you alſo is conſigned the mighty privilege of forming the hearts and minds of your infant ſons. By the bleſſing of God on the principles you ſhall, as far as it depends on you, infuſe into both ſons and daughters, they will hereafter "ariſe and call you bleſſed." And in the great day of general account, may every Chriſtian mother be enabled through divine grace to ſay, with humble confidence, to her Maker and Redeemer, "Behold the children whom thou haſt "given me!"

Chriſtianity, driven out from the reſt of the world, has ſtill, bleſſed be God! a "ſtrong "hold" in this country. And though it be the ſpecial duty of the appointed "watchman, *now* "that he ſeeth the ſword come upon the land, "to blow the trumpet and warn the people, "which if he neglect to do, their blood ſhall be "required of the watchman's hand*:" yet, in this ſacred garriſon, *impregnable but by neglect*, YOU too have an awful poſt, that of arming the minds of the riſing generation with "the ſhield "of faith, whereby they ſhall be able to quench

* Ezekiel, xxxiii. 6.

" the fiery darts of the wicked;" that of girding them with "that ſword of the Spirit, which " is the word of God." If you neglect this your bounden duty, you will have effectually contributed to expel Chriſtianity from her laſt citadel. And, remember, that the dignity of the work to which you are called, is no leſs than that of preſerving the ark of the Lord.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

On the education of women.—The prevailing ſyſtem tends to eſtabliſh the errors which it ought to correct.—Dangers ariſing from an exceſſive cultivation of the arts.

IT is far from being the object of this ſlight work to offer a regular plan of female education, a taſk which has been often more properly aſſumed by far abler writers; but it is intended rather to ſuggeſt a few remarks on the reigning mode, which, though it has had many panegyriſts, appears to be defective, not only in a few particulars, but as a general ſyſtem. There are indeed numberleſs honourable exceptions to an obſervation which will be thought ſevere; yet the author queſtions if it be not the natural and direct tendency of the prevailing and popular ſyſtem, to excite and promote thoſe very defects, which it ought to be the main end and object of Chriſtian education to remove; whether, inſtead of directing this important engine to attack and deſtroy *vanity*, *ſelfiſhneſs*, *and inconſideration*, that triple alliance in ſtrict and conſtant league againſt female virtue; the combined powers of inſtruction are not ſedulouſly confederated in confirming their ſtrength and eſtabliſhing their empire?

If indeed the *material* ſubſtance, if the body and limbs, with the organs and ſenſes, be really the more valuable objects of attention, then there is little room for animadverſion and improvement. But if the immaterial and immortal mind; if the heart, "out of which are the iſ-"ſues of life," be the main concern; if the great buſineſs of education be to implant ideas, to communicate knowledge, to form a correct taſte and a ſound judgment, to reſiſt evil propenſities, and, above all, to ſeize the favourable ſeaſon for infuſing principles and confirming habits; if education be a ſchool to fit us for life, and life be a ſchool to fit us for eternity; if ſuch, I repeat it, be the chief work and grand ends of education, it may then be worth enquiring how far theſe ends are likely to be effected by the prevailing ſyſtem.

Is it not a fundamental error to conſider children as innocent beings, whoſe little weakneſſes may perhaps want ſome correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil diſpoſitions, which it ſhould be the great end of education to rectify? This appears to be ſuch a foundation-truth, that if I were aſked what quality is moſt important in an inſtructor of youth, I ſhould not heſitate to reply, *ſuch a ſtrong impreſſion of the corruption of our nature, as ſhould inſure a diſpoſition to counteract it; together with ſuch a deep view and thorough knowledge of the human heart, as ſhould be neceſſary for developing and controlling its moſt ſe-*

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cret and complicated workings. And let us remember that to *know the world*, as it is called, that is, to know its local manners, temporary uſages, and evaneſcent faſhions, is not to *know human nature:* and that where this prime knowledge is wanting, thoſe natural evils which ought to be counteracted will be foſtered.

Vanity, for inſtance, is reckoned among the light and venial errors of youth; nay, ſo far from being treated as a dangerous enemy, it is often called in as an auxiliary. At worſt, it is conſidered as a harmleſs weakneſs, which ſubtracts little from the value of a character; as a natural efferveſcence, which will ſubſide of itſelf, when the firſt ferment of the youthful paſſions ſhall have done working. But thoſe know little of the conformation of the human, and eſpecially of the female heart, who fancy that vanity is ever exhauſted by the mere operation of time and events. Let thoſe who maintain this opinion look into our places of public reſort, and there behold if the ghoſt of departed beauty is not to its laſt flitting fond of haunting the ſcenes of its paſt pleaſures; the ſoul, unwilling (if I may borrow an alluſion from the Platonic mythology) to quit the ſpot in which the body enjoyed its former delights, ſtill continues to hover about the ſame place, though the ſame pleaſures are no longer to be found there. Diſappointments indeed may divert vanity into a new direction; prudence may prevent it from breaking out into exceſſes, and age may prove

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that it is "vexation of ſpirit;" but neither diſappointment, prudence, nor age can *cure* it; for they do not correct the principle. Nay, the very diſappointment itſelf ſerves as a painful evidence of its protracted exiſtence.

Since then there is a ſeaſon when the youthful muſt ceaſe to be young, and the beautiful to excite admiration; to learn how to grow old gracefully is perhaps one of the rareſt and moſt valuable arts which can be taught to woman. And it muſt be confeſſed it is a moſt ſevere trial to be called to lay down beauty, for thoſe who have nothing elſe to take up. It is for this ſober ſeaſon of life that education ſhould lay up its rich reſources. However diſregarded they may hitherto have been, they will be wanted now. When admirers fall away, and flatterers become mute, the mind will be driven to retire into itſelf, and if it find no entertainment at home, it will be driven back again upon the world with increaſed force. Yet forgetting this, do we not ſeem to educate our daughters, excluſively, for the tranſient period of youth, when it is to maturer life we ought to advert? Do we not educate them for a crowd, forgetting that they are to live at home? for the world, and not for themſelves? for ſhow, and not for uſe? for time, and not for eternity?

Vanity (and the ſame may be ſaid of ſelfiſhneſs) is not to be reſiſted like any other vice, which is ſometimes buſy and ſometimes quiet; it is not to be attacked as a ſingle fault, which

is

is indulged in oppoſition to a ſingle virtue; but it is uniformly to be controlled, as an active, a reſtleſs, a growing principle, at conſtant war with all the Chriſtian graces; which not only mixes itſelf with all our faults, but inſinuates itſelf into all our virtues too; and will, if not checked effectually, rob our beſt actions of their reward. Vanity, if I may uſe the analogy, is, with reſpect to the other vices, what feeling is in regard to the other ſenſes; it is not confined in its operation to the eye, or the ear, or any ſingle organ, but diffuſed through the whole being, alive in every part, awakened and communicated by the ſlighteſt touch.

Not a few of the evils of the preſent day ariſe from a new and perverted application of terms; among theſe, perhaps, there is not one more abuſed, miſunderſtood, or miſapplied, than the term *accompliſhments*. This word in its original meaning ſignifies *completeneſs*, *perfection*. But I may ſafely appeal to the obſervation of mankind, whether they do not meet with ſwarms of youthful females, iſſuing from our boarding-ſchools, as well as emerging from the more private ſcenes of domeſtic education, who are introduced into the world under the broad and univerſal title of *accompliſhed young ladies*, of *all* of whom it cannot very truly and correctly be pronounced, that they illuſtrate the definition by a completeneſs which leaves nothing to be added, and a perfection which leaves nothing to be deſired.

This

This phrenzy of accompliſhments, unhappily, is no longer reſtricted within the uſual limits of rank and fortune; the middle orders have caught the contagion, and it rages downward with increaſing and deſtructive violence, from the elegantly dreſſed but ſlenderly portioned curate's daughter, to the equally faſhionable daughter of the little tradeſman, and of the more opulent, but not more judicious farmer. And is it not obvious, that as far as this epidemical mania has ſpread, this very valuable part of ſociety is declining in uſefulneſs, as it riſes in its unlucky pretenſions to elegance? 'till this rapid revolution of the manners of the middle claſs has ſo far altered the character of the age, as to be in danger of rendering obſolete the heretofore common ſaying, that "moſt worth "and virtue are to be found in the middle ſta-"tion." For I do not ſcruple to aſſert, that in general, as far as my little obſervation has extended, this claſs of females, in what relates both to religious knowledge and to practical induſtry, falls ſhort both of the very high and the very low. Their new courſe of education, and the habits of life, and elegance of dreſs connected with it, peculiarly unfits them for the active duties of their own very important condition; while, with frivolous eagerneſs and ſecond-hand opportunities, they run to ſnatch a few of thoſe ſhowy acquirements which decorate the great. This is done apparently with one or other of theſe views; either to make their fortune by marriage, or if that fail, to qualify them to become

come teachers of others: hence the abundant multiplication of ſuperficial wives, and of incompetent and illiterate governeſſes. The uſe of the pencil, the performance of exquiſite but unneceſſary works, the ſtudy of foreign languages and of muſic, require (with ſome exceptions, which ſhould always be made in favour of great natural genius) a degree of leiſure which belongs excluſively to affluence *. One uſe of learning languages is, not that we may know what the terms which expreſs the articles of our dreſs and our table are called in French or Italian; not that we may think over a few ordinary phraſes in Engliſh, and then tranſlate them, without one foreign idiom; for he who cannot *think* in a language cannot be ſaid to underſtand it: but the great uſe of acquiring any foreign language is, either that it enables us occaſionally to converſe with foreigners unacquainted with any other, or that it is a key to the literature of the country to which it belongs; and thoſe humbler females, the chief part of whoſe time is required for domeſtic offices, are little likely to fall in the way of foreigners; and ſo far from enjoying opportunities for the acquiſition of foreign literature, they have ſeldom time to poſſeſs themſelves of much of that valuable knowledge, which the books of their own country ſo abundantly furniſh; and the acquiſition of which

* Thoſe among the claſs in queſtion, whoſe own good ſenſe leads them to avoid theſe miſtaken purſuits, cannot be offended at a reproof which does not belong to them.

would be ſo much more uſeful and honourable than the paltry acceſſions they make, by hammering out the meaning of a few paſſages in a tongue they but imperfectly underſtand, and of which they are likely to make no uſe.

It would be well if the reflection how eagerly this redundancy of accompliſhments is ſeized on by their inferiors, were to operate as in the caſe of other abſurd faſhions; the rich and great being ſeldom brought to renounce any mode or cuſtom, from the mere conſideration that it is prepoſterous, or that it is wrong; while they are frightened into its immediate relinquiſhment, from the preſſing conſideration that the *vulgar* are beginning to adopt it.

But, to return to that more elevated, and, on account of their more extended influence only, that more important claſs of females, to whoſe uſe this little work is more immediately dedicated. Some popular authors, on the ſubject of female inſtruction, had for a time eſtabliſhed a fantaſtic code of artificial manners. They had refined eloquence into inſipidity, frittered down delicacy into frivolouſneſs, and reduced manner into *minauderie*. But "to liſp "and to amble, and to nick-name God's crea- "tures," has nothing to do with true gentleneſs of mind; and to be ſilly makes no neceſſary part of ſoftneſs. Another claſs of cotemporary authors turned all the force of their talents to excite *emotions*, to inſpire *ſentiment*, and to reduce all mental and moral excellence into *ſympathy* and *feeling*

feeling. Theſe ſofter qualities were elevated at the expence of principle; and young women were inceſſantly hearing unqualified ſenſibility extolled as the perfection of their nature; till thoſe who really poſſeſſed this amiable quality, inſtead of directing, and chaſtiſing, and reſtraining it, were in danger of foſtering it to their hurt, and began to conſider themſelves as deriving their excellence from its exceſs; while thoſe leſs intereſting damſels, who happened not to find any of this amiable ſenſibility in their *hearts*, but thought it creditable to have it ſomewhere, fancied its ſeat was in the *nerves*; and here indeed it was eaſily found or feigned; till a falſe and exceſſive diſplay of feeling became ſo predominant, as to bring in queſtion the actual exiſtence of that true tenderneſs, without which, though a woman may be worthy, ſhe can never be amiable.

Faſhion then, by one of her ſudden and rapid turns, inſtantaneouſly ſtruck out both real ſenſibility and the affectation of it from the ſtanding liſt of female perfections; and, by a quick touch of her magic wand, ſhifted the ſcene, and at once produced the bold and independent beauty, the intrepid female, the hoyden, the huntreſs, and the archer; the ſwinging arms, the confident addreſs, the regimental, and the four-in-hand. Such ſelf-complacent heroines made us ready to regret their ſofter predeceſſors, who had aimed only at *pleaſing* the other ſex, while theſe aſpiring fair ones ſtruggled for the bolder renown of *rivalling* them

them. The project failed; for, whereas the former had ſued for admiration, the latter challenged, ſeized, compelled it; but the men, as was natural, continued to prefer the more modeſt claimant to the ſturdy competitor.

It were well if we, who have the advantage of contemplating the errors of the two extremes, were to look for truth where ſhe is commonly to be found, in the plain and obvious middle path, equally remote from each exceſs; and, while we bear in mind that helpleſſneſs is not delicacy, let us alſo remember that maſculine manners do not neceſſarily include ſtrength of character nor vigour of intellect. Should we not reflect alſo, that we are neither to train up Amazons nor Circaſſians, but that it is our buſineſs to form Chriſtians? that we have to educate not only rational, but accountable beings? and, remembering this, ſhould we not be ſolicitous to let our daughters learn of the well-taught, and aſſociate with the well-bred? In training them, ſhould we not carefully cultivate intellect, implant religion, and cheriſh modeſty? then, whatever is engaging in manners, would be the natural reſult of whatever is juſt in ſentiment, and correct in principle; ſoftneſs would grow out of humility, and external delicacy would ſpring from purity of heart: then the decorums, the proprieties, the elegancies, and even the graces, as far as they are ſimple, pure, and honeſt, would follow as an almoſt inevitable conſequence; for to follow in the train of the Chriſtian virtues, and

not

not to take the lead of them, is the proper place which religion aſſigns to the graces.

Whether we have made the beſt uſe of the errors of our predeceſſors, and of our own numberleſs advantages, and whether the prevailing ſyſtem be really conſiſtent with ſound policy, true taſte, or Chriſtian principle, it may be worth our while to inquire.

Would not a ſtranger be led to imagine by a view of the reigning mode of female education, that human life conſiſted of one univerſal holiday, and that the grand conteſt between the ſeveral competitors was, who ſhould be moſt eminently qualified to excel, and carry off the prize, in the various ſhows and games which were intended to be exhibited in it? And to the exhibitors themſelves, would he not be ready to apply Sir Francis Bacon's obſervation on the Olympian victors, that they were ſo excellent in theſe unneceſſary things, that their perfection muſt needs have been acquired by the neglect of whatever was neceſſary?

What would the poliſhed Addiſon, who thought that one great end of a lady's learning to dance was, that ſhe might know how to ſit ſtill gracefully; what would even the Pagan hiſtorian * of the great Roman conſpirator, who could commemorate it among the defects of his hero's *accompliſhed* miſtreſs, "that ſhe was

* Salluſt.

"was too good a ſinger and dancer for a vir-
"tuous woman;"—what would theſe refined critics have ſaid, had they lived as we have done, to ſee the art of dancing lifted into ſuch importance, that it cannot with any degree of ſafety be conſided to one inſtructor, but a whole train of ſucceſſive maſters are conſidered as abſolutely eſſential to its perfection? What would theſe accurate judges of female manners have ſaid, to ſee a modeſt young lady firſt delivered into the hands of a military ſerjeant to inſtruct her in the *feminine* art of marching? and when this delicate acquiſition is attained, to ſee her transferred to a profeſſor who is to teach her the Scotch ſteps; which profeſſor, having communicated his indiſpenſable portion of this indiſpenſable art, makes way for the profeſſor of French dances; and all perhaps, in their turn, either yield to, or have the honour to co-operate with, a finiſhing maſter; each probably receiving a ſtipend which would make the pious curate or the learned chaplain rich and happy?

The ſcience of muſic, which uſed to be communicated in ſo competent a degree to a young lady by one able inſtructor, is now diſtributed among a whole band. She now requires, not a maſter, but an orcheſtra. And my country readers would accuſe me of exaggeration, were I to hazard enumerating the variety of muſical teachers who attend at the ſame time in the ſame family; the

daughters

daughters of which are ſummoned, by at leaſt as many inſtruments as the ſubjects of Nebuchadnezzar, to worſhip the idol which faſhion has ſet up. They would be incredulous were I to produce real inſtances, in which the delighted mother has been heard to declare, that the viſits of maſters of every art, and the different maſters for various gradations of the ſame art, followed each other in ſuch cloſe and rapid ſucceſſion during the whole London reſidence, that her girls had not a moment's interval to look into a book; nor could ſhe contrive any method to introduce one, till ſhe happily deviſed the ſcheme of reading to them herſelf for half an hour while they were drawing, by which means no time was loſt *.

Before the evil is paſt redreſs, it will be prudent to reflect that in all poliſhed countries an entire

* Since the firſt edition of this Work appeared, the author has received from a perſon of great eminence the following ſtatement, aſcertaining the *time* employed in the acquiſition of muſic in one inſtance. As a *general* calculation, it will perhaps be found to be ſo far from exaggerated, as to be below the truth. The ſtatement concludes with remarking, that the individual who is the ſubject of it is now married to a man who *diſlikes muſic!*

Suppoſe your pupil to begin at ſix years of age, and to continue at the average of four hours a-day *only*, Sunday excepted, and thirteen days allowed for travelling annually, till ſhe is eighteen, the ſtate ſtands thus; 300 days multiplied by four, the number of hours amount to 1200; that number multiplied by twelve, which is the number of years, amounts to 14,400 hours!

entire devotedneſs to the fine arts has been one grand ſource of the corruption of the women; and ſo juſtly were theſe pernicious conſequences appreciated by the Greeks, among whom theſe arts were carried to the higheſt poſſible perfection, that they ſeldom allowed them to be cultivated to a very exquiſite degree by women of great purity of character. And if the ambition of an elegant Britiſh lady ſhould be fired by the idea that the accompliſhed females of thoſe poliſhed ſtates were the admired companions of the philoſophers, the poets, the wits, and the artiſts of Athens; and their beauty or talents, ſo much the favourite ſubjects of the muſe, the lyre, the pencil, and the chiſſel, that their pictures and ſtatues furniſhed the moſt conſummate models of Grecian art: if, I ſay, the accompliſhed females of our days are panting for ſimilar renown, let their modeſty chaſtiſe their ambition, by recollecting that theſe celebrated women are not to be found among the chaſte wives and virtuous daughters of the Ariſtides's, the Agis's, and the Phocions; but that they are to be looked for among the Phrynes, the Lais's, the Aſpaſias, and the Glyceras. I am perſuaded the truly Chriſtian female, whatever be her taſte or her talents, will renounce the deſire of any celebrity when attached to impurity of character, with the ſame noble indignation with which the virtuous biographer of the above-named heroes renounced any kind of diſhoneſt fame, by exclaiming, "I had rather it ſhould be ſaid there never

"was

"was a Plutarch, than that they ſhould ſay "Plutarch was malignant, unjuſt, or envious *."

And while this corruption, brought on by an exceſſive cultivation of the arts, has contributed its full ſhare to the decline of ſtates, it has always furniſhed an infallible ſymptom of their impending fall. The ſatires of the moſt penetrating and judicious of the Roman poets, corroborating the teſtimonies of the moſt accurate of their hiſtorians, abound with invectives againſt the general depravity of manners introduced by the corrupt habits of female education. The bitterneſs and groſs indelicacy of ſome of theſe ſatyriſts (too groſs to be either quoted or referred to) make little againſt their authority in theſe points; for how ſhocking muſt thoſe corruptions have been, and how obviouſly offenſive their cauſes, which could have appeared ſo highly diſguſting to minds ſo coarſe as not likely to be ſcandalized by ſlight deviations from decency! The famous ode of Horace, attributing the vices and diſaſters of his degenerate country to the ſame cauſe, might, were it quite free from the above objections, be produced, I will not preſume to ſay as an exact picture of the exiſting manners of this country; but may I not venture to ſay, as a prophecy, the fulfilment of which cannot be very remote? It may however be obſerved, that the modeſty of the Roman matron, and the chaſte demeanor of her virgin daughters, which

* No cenſure is levelled at the exertions of real genius, which is as valuable as it is rare; but at the abſurdity of that ſyſtem which is erecting *the whole ſex* into artiſts.

which amidſt the ſtern virtues of the ſtate were as immaculate and pure as the honour of the Roman citizen, fell a ſacrifice to the luxurious diſſipation brought in by their Aſiatic conqueſts; after which the females were ſoon taught a complete change of character. They were inſtructed to accommodate their talents of pleaſing to the more vitiated taſtes of the other ſex: and began to ſtudy every grace and every art which might captivate the exhauſted hearts, and excite the wearied and capricious inclinations of the men: till by a rapid and at length complete enervation, the Roman character loſt its ſignature, and through a quick ſucceſſion of ſlavery, effeminacy, and vice, ſunk into that degeneracy of which ſome of the modern Italian ſtates ſerve to furniſh a too juſt ſpecimen.

It is of the eſſence of human things, that the ſame objects, which are highly uſeful in their ſeaſon, meaſure, and degree, become miſchievous in their exceſs, at other periods, and under other circumſtances. In a ſtate of barbariſm, the arts are among the beſt reformers; and they go on to be improved themſelves, and improving thoſe who cultivate them, till, having reached a certain point, thoſe very arts which were the inſtruments of civilization and refinement, become inſtruments of corruption and decay; enervating and depraving in the ſecond inſtance, by the exceſs and univerſality of their cultivation, as certainly as they refined in the firſt. They become agents of voluptuouſneſs. They excite the imagination;

gination; and the imagination thus excited, and no longer under the government of ſtrict principle, becomes the moſt dangerous ſtimulant of the paſſions; promotes a too keen reliſh for pleaſure, teaching how to multiply its ſources, and inventing new and pernicious modes of artificial gratification.

May we not rank among the preſent corrupt conſequences of this unbounded cultivation, the unchaſte *coſtume*, the impure ſtyle of dreſs, and that indelicate ſtatue-like exhibition of the female figure, which by its artfully-diſpoſed folds, its ſeemingly wet and adheſive drapery, ſo defines the form as to prevent covering itſelf from becoming a veil? This licentious mode, as the acute Monteſquieu obſerved on the dances of the Spartan virgins, has taught us "to ſtrip chaſtity itſelf of modeſty."

May the author be allowed to addreſs to our own country and our own circumſtances, to both of which they ſeem peculiarly applicable, the ſpirit of that beautiful apoſtrophe of the moſt poliſhed poet of antiquity to the moſt victorious nation? "Let us leave to the inhabitants of *con-*
"*quered countries* the praiſe of carrying to the
"very higheſt degree of perfection, ſculpture
"and the ſiſter arts; but let *this* country direct
"her own exertions to the art of governing man-
"kind in equity and peace, of ſhewing mercy to
"the ſubmiſſive, and of abaſing the proud
"among ſurrounding nations *."

* Let me not be ſuſpected of bringing into any ſort of compariſon the gentleneſs of Britiſh government with the

the rapacity of Roman conqueſts, or the tyrannical principles of Roman dominion. To ſpoil, to butcher, and to commit every kind of violence, they call, ſays one of the ableſt of their hiſtorians, by the lying name of *government*; and when they have ſpread a general deſolation, they call it *peace* (1).

With ſuch *dictatorial*, or, as we might now read, *directorial* inquiſitors, *we* can have no point of contact; and if I have applied the ſervile flattery of a delightful poet to the purpoſe of Engliſh happineſs, it was only to ſhew wherein true national grandeur conſiſts, and that every country pays too dear a price for thoſe arts and embelliſhments of ſociety which endanger the loſs of its morals and manners.

(1) Tacitus' Life of Agricola, Speech of Galgacus to his Soldiers.

CHAPTER III.

External improvement.—Children's balls.—French governeſſes.

LET me not however be miſunderſtood. The cuſtoms which faſhion has eſtabliſhed, when not in direct oppoſition to what is right, ſhould unqueſtionably be purſued in the education of ladies. Piety maintains no natural war with elegance, and Chriſtianity would be no gainer by making her diſciples unamiable. Religion does not forbid that the exterior be made to a certain degree the object of attention. But the admiration beſtowed, the ſums expended, and the time laviſhed on arts which add little to the intrinſic value of life, ſhould have limitations. While theſe arts ſhould be admired, let them not

not be admired above their juſt value: while they are practiſed, let it not be to the excluſion of higher employments: while they are cultivated, let it be to amuſe leiſure, not to engroſs life.

But it happens unfortunately, that to ordinary obſervers, the girl who is really receiving the worſt inſtruction often makes the beſt figure; while in the more correct but leſs oſtenſible education, the deep and ſure foundations to which the edifice will owe its ſtrength and ſtability lie out of ſight. The outward accompliſhments have the dangerous advantage of addreſſing themſelves more immediately to the ſenſes, and of courſe, meet every where with thoſe who can in ſome meaſure appreciate as well as admire them; for all can ſee and hear, but all cannot ſcrutinize and diſcriminate. External acquirements too recommend themſelves the more, becauſe they are more rapidly as well as more viſibly progreſſive. While the mind is led on to improvement by ſlow motions and imperceptible degrees; while the heart muſt now be admoniſhed by reproof, and now allured by kindneſs; its livelieſt advances being ſuddenly impeded by obſtinacy, and its brighteſt proſpects often obſcured by paſſion; it is ſlow in its acquiſitions of virtue, and reluctant in its approaches to piety. The unruly and turbulent propenſities of the mind are not ſo obedient to the forming hand as defects of manner or aukwardneſs of gait. Often when we fancy that a troubleſome paſſion is completely cruſhed, we have the mortification to find that

we

we have "ſcotch'd the ſnake, not killed it." One evil temper ſtarts up before another is conquered. The ſubduing hand cannot cut off the ever-ſprouting heads, ſo faſt as the prolific Hydra can re-produce them, nor fell the ſtubborn Antæus ſo often as he can recruit his ſtrength, and riſe in vigorous and repeated oppoſition.

Hired teachers are alſo under a diſadvantage reſembling tenants at rack-rent; it is their intereſt to bring in an immediate revenue of praiſe and profit, and, for the ſake of a preſent rich crop, thoſe who are not ſtrictly conſcientious, do not care how much the ground is impoveriſhed for future produce. But parents, who are the lords of the ſoil, muſt look to permanent value, and to continued fruitfulneſs. The beſt effects of a careful education are often very remote; they are to be diſcovered in future ſcenes, and exhibited in as yet untried connexions. Every event of life will be putting the heart into freſh ſituations, and making new demands on its prudence, its firmneſs, its integrity, or its forbearance. Thoſe whoſe buſineſs it is to form and model it, cannot foreſee thoſe contingent ſituations ſpecifically and diſtinctly; yet, as far as human wiſdom will allow, they muſt enable it to prepare for them all by general principles, correct habits, and an unremitted ſenſe of dependence on the Great Diſpoſer of events. The young Chriſtian militant muſt learn and practiſe all his evolutions; though he does not know on what ſervice his leader may command him,

by

by what particular foe he ſhall be moſt aſſailed, nor what mode of attack the enemy may employ.

But the contrary of all this is the caſe with external acquiſitions. The maſter, it is his intereſt, will induſtriouſly inſtruct his young pupil to ſet all her improvements in the moſt immediate and conſpicuous point of view. To attract admiration is the great principle ſedulouſly inculcated into her young heart; and is conſidered as the fundamental maxim; and, perhaps, if we were required to condenſe the reigning ſyſtem of the brilliant education of a lady into an aphoriſm, it might be comprifed in this ſhort ſentence, *To allure and to ſhine.* This ſyſtem however is the fruitful germ, from which a thouſand yet unborn vanities, with all their multiplied ramifications, will ſpring. A tender mother cannot but feel an honeſt triumph in contempleting thoſe talents in her daughter which will neceſſarily excite admiration; but ſhe will alſo ſhudder at the vanity that admiration may excite, and at the new ideas it will awaken; and, ſtartling as it may ſound, the labours of a wiſe mother anxious for her daughter's beſt intereſts, will ſeem to be at variance with thoſe of all her teachers. She will indeed rejoice at her progreſs, but ſhe will rejoice with trembling; for ſhe is fully aware that if all poſſible accompliſhments could be bought at the price of a ſingle virtue, of a ſingle principle, the purchaſe would be infinitely dear, and ſhe would reject the dazzling

zling but deſtructive acquiſition. She knows that the ſuperſtructure of the accompliſhments can be alone ſafely erected on the broad and ſolid baſis of Chriſtian humility: nay more, that as the materials of which that ſuperſtructure is to be compoſed, are in themſelves of ſo unſtable and tottering a nature, the foundation muſt be deepened, and enlarged with more abundant care, otherwiſe the fabric will be overloaded with its own ornaments, and what was intended only to embelliſh the building, will prove the occaſion of its fall.

"To every thing there is a ſeaſon, and a time "for every purpoſe under heaven," ſaid the wiſe man; but he ſaid it before the invention of baby-balls; an invention which has formed a kind of æra, and a moſt inauſpicious one, in the annals of poliſhed education. This modern device is a ſort of triple conſpiracy againſt the innocence, the health, and the happineſs of children; thus, by factitious amuſements, to rob them of a reliſh for the ſimple joys, the unbought delights, which naturally belong to their blooming ſeaſon, is like blotting out ſpring from the year. To ſacrifice the true and proper enjoyments of ſprightly and happy children, is to make them pay a dear and diſproportionate price for their artificial pleaſures. They ſtep at once from the nurſery to the ball-room; and, by a change of habits as new as it is prepoſterous, are thinking of dreſſing themſelves, at an age when they uſed to be dreſſing their dolls. Inſtead of bounding with the unreſtrained free-

dom

dom of little wood-nymphs over hill and dale, their cheeks flushed with health, and their hearts overflowing with happiness, these *gay* little creatures are shut up all the morning, demurely practising the *pas grave*, and transacting the serious business of acquiring a new step for the evening, with more cost of time and pains than it would have taken them to acquire twenty new ideas.

Thus they lose the amusements which naturally belong to their smiling period, and unnaturally anticipate those pleasures (such as they are) which would come in, too much of course, on their introduction into fashionable life. The true pleasures of childhood are cheap and natural; for every object teems with delight to eyes and hearts new to the enjoyment of life; nay, the hearts of healthy children abound with a general disposition to mirth and joyfulness, even without a specific object to excite it; like our first parent, in the world's first spring, when all was new, and fresh, and gay about him,

> they live and move,
> And feel that they are happier than they know.

Only furnish them with a few simple and harmless materials, and a little, but not too much, leisure, and they will manufacture their own pleasures with more skill, and success, and satisfaction, than they will receive from all that your money can purchase. Their bodily recreations should be such as will promote their health,

quicken their activity, enliven their ſpirits, whet their ingenuity, and qualify them for their mental work. But, if you begin thus early to create wants, to invent gratifications, to multiply deſires, to waken dormant ſenſibilities, to ſtir up hidden fires, you are ſtudiouſly laying up for your children a ſtore of premature caprice, and irritability, and impatience, and diſcontent.

While childhood preſerves its native ſimplicity, every little change is intereſting, every gratification is a luxury; a ride or a walk, a garland of flowers of her own forming, a plant of her own cultivating, will be a delightful amuſement to a child in her natural ſtate; but theſe harmleſs and intereſting recreations will be dull and taſteleſs to a ſophiſticated little creature, nurſed in ſuch forced, and coſtly, and vapid pleaſures. Alas! that we ſhould throw away this firſt grand opportunity of working into a practical habit the moral of this important truth, that the chief ſource of human diſcontent is to be looked for, not in our real, but in our factitious wants; not in the demands of nature, but in the inſatiable cravings of artificial deſire!

When one ſees the growing zeal to crowd the midnight ball with theſe pretty fairies, one would be almoſt tempted to fancy it was a kind of pious emulation among the mothers to cure their infants of a fondneſs for vain and fooliſh pleaſures, by tiring them out by this premature familiarity

familiarity with them. And one would be ſo deſirous to invent an excuſe for a practice ſo inexcuſable, that one would be ready to hope that they were actuated by ſomething of the ſame principle which led the Spartans to introduce their ſons to ſcenes of riot, that they might conceive an early diſguſt at vice! or poſſibly, that they imitated thoſe Scythian mothers who uſed to plunge their new-born infants into the flood, thinking none to be worth ſaving who could not ſtand this early ſtruggle for their lives: the greater part indeed, as it might have been expected, periſhed; but the parents took comfort, that if many were loſt, the few who eſcaped would be the ſtronger for having been thus expoſed.

To behold lilliputian coquettes, projecting dreſſes, ſtudying colours, aſſorting ribbands and chooſing feathers, their little hearts beating with hopes about partners and fears about rivals; and to ſee their freſh cheeks pale after the midnight ſupper, their aching heads and unbraced nerves, diſqualifying the little languid beings for the next day's taſk; and to hear the grave apology, "that it is owing to the wine, the crowd, the "heated room of the laſt night's ball;" all this, I ſay, would really be as ludicrous, if the miſchief of the thing did not take off from the merriment of it, as any of the ridiculous and prepoſterous diſproportions in the diverting travels of Captain Lemuel Gulliver.

Under a juſt impreſſion of the evils which we are ſuſtaining from the principles and the practices of *modern* France, we are apt to loſe ſight of thoſe deep and laſting miſchiefs which ſo long, ſo regularly, and ſo ſyſtematically, we have been importing from the ſame country, though in another form and under another government. In one reſpect, indeed, the firſt were the more formidable, becauſe we embraced the ruin without ſuſpecting it; while we defeat the malignity of the latter, by detecting the turpitude and defending ourſelves againſt it. This is not the place to deſcant on that levity of manners, that contempt of the Sabbath, that fatal familiarity with looſe principles, and thoſe relaxed notions of conjugal fidelity, which have often been tranſplanted into this country by women of faſhion, as a too common effect of a long reſidence in that: but it is peculiarly ſuitable to my ſubject to advert to another domeſtic miſchief derived from the ſame foreign extraction: I mean, the riſks that have been run, and the ſacrifices which have been made, in order to furniſh our young ladies with the means of acquiring the French language in the greateſt poſſible purity. Perfection in this accompliſhment has been ſo long eſtabliſhed as the ſupreme object; ſo long conſidered as the predominant excellence to which all other excellencies muſt bow down, that it would be hopeleſs to attack a law which faſhion has immutably decreed, and which

which has received the ſtamp of long preſcription. We muſt therefore be contented with expreſſing a wiſh, that this indiſpenſable perfection could have been attained at the expence of ſacrifices leſs important. It is with the greater regret I animadvert on this and ſome other prevailing practices, as they are errors into which the wiſe and reſpectable have, through want of conſideration, or rather through want of firmneſs to reſiſt the tyranny of faſhion, ſometimes fallen. It has not been unuſual when mothers of rank and reputation have been aſked how they ventured to intruſt their daughters to foreigners, of whoſe principles they knew nothing, except that they were Roman Catholics, to anſwer, "That they had taken care to be ſecure "on that ſubject, for that it had been ſtipulated "that *the queſtion of religion ſhould never be* "*agitated between the teacher and the pupil.*" This, it muſt be confeſſed, is a moſt deſperate remedy; it is like ſtarving to death, to avoid being poiſoned. And one cannot help trembling for the event of that education, from which religion, as far as the governeſs is concerned, is thus formally and ſyſtematically excluded. Surely it would not be exacting too much, to ſuggeſt at leaſt that an attention no leſs ſcrupulous ſhould be exerted to inſure the character of our children's inſtructor for piety and knowledge, than is thought neceſſary to aſcertain that ſhe has nothing *patois* in her dialect.

I would

I would rate a correct pronunciation and an elegant phraſeology at their juſt price, and I would not rate them low; but I would not offer up piety and principle as victims to ſounds and cents. And the matter is now made more eaſy; for whatever diſgrace it might once have brought on an Engliſh lady to have had it ſuſpected from her accent that ſhe had the misfortune not to be born in a neighbouring country; ſome recent events may ſerve to reconcile her to the ſuſpicion of having been bred in her own: a country, to which (with all its ſins, which are many!) the whole world is looking up with envy and admiration, as the ſeat of true glory and of comparative happineſs: a country, in which the exile, driven out by the crimes of his own, finds a home; a country, to obtain the protection of which it was claim enough to be unfortunate; and no impediment to have been the ſubject of her direſt foe! a country, which in this reſpect humbly imitating the Father of compaſſion, when it offered mercy to a ſuppliant enemy, never conditioned for merit, nor inſiſted on the virtues of the miſerable as a preliminary to its own bounty!

CHAPTER IV.

Compariſon of the mode of female education in the laſt age with the preſent.

TO return, however, to the ſubject of general education. A young lady may excel in ſpeaking French and Italian, may repeat a few paſſages from a volume of extracts; play like a profeſſor, and ſing like a ſyren; have her dreſſing-room decorated with her own drawings, tables, ſtands, flower-pots, ſcreens, and cabinets; nay, ſhe may dance like Sempronia * herſelf, and yet may have been very badly educated. I am far from meaning to ſet no value whatever on any or all of theſe qualifications; they are all of them elegant, and many of them properly tend to the perfecting of a polite education. Theſe things, in their meaſure and degree, may be done, but there are others which ſhould not be left undone. Many things are becoming, but "one "thing is needful." Beſides, as the world ſeems to be fully apprized of the value of whatever tends to embelliſh life, there is leſs occaſion here to inſiſt on its importance.

But, though a well-bred young lady may lawfully learn moſt of the faſhionable arts, yet it

* See Cataline's Conſpiracy.

it does not ſeem to be the true end of education to make women of faſhion *dancers*, *ſingers*, *players*, *painters*, *actreſſes*, *ſculptors*, *gilders*, *varniſhers*, *engravers*, and *embroiderers*. Moſt *men* are commonly deſtined to ſome profeſſion, and their minds are conſequently turned each to its reſpective object. Would it not be ſtrange if they were called out to exerciſe their profeſſion, or to ſet up their trade, with only a little general knowledge of the trades of all other men, and without any previous definite application to their own peculiar calling? The profeſſion of ladies, to which the bent of *their* inſtruction ſhould be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers, and miſtreſſes of families. They ſhould be therefore trained with a view to theſe ſeveral conditions, and be furniſhed with a ſtock of ideas, and principles, and qualifications, and habits, ready to be applied and appropriated, as occaſion may demand, to each of theſe reſpective ſituations: for though the arts which merely embelliſh life muſt claim admiration; yet when a man of ſenſe comes to marry, it is a companion whom he wants, and not an artiſt. It is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and dreſs, and dance; it is a being who can comfort and counſel him; one who can reaſon, and reflect, and feel, and judge, and act, and diſcourſe, and diſcriminate; one who can aſſiſt him in his affairs, lighten his cares, ſoothe his ſorrows, purify his joys,

joys, ſtrengthen his principles, and educate his children.

Almoſt any ornamental acquirement is a good thing, when it is not the beſt thing a woman has; and talents are admirable when not made to ſtand proxy for virtues. The writer of theſe pages is intimately acquainted with ſeveral ladies who, excelling moſt of their ſex in the art of muſic, but excelling them alſo in prudence and piety, find little leiſure or temptation, amidſt the delights and duties of a large and lovely family, for the exerciſe of this talent; they regret that ſo much of their own youth was waſted in acquiring an art which can be turned to ſo little account in married life; and are now conſcientiouſly reſtricting their daughters in the portion of time allotted to its acquiſition.

Far be it from me to diſcourage the cultivation of any exiſting talent; but may it not be queſtioned of the fond believing mother, whether talents, like the ſpirits of Owen Glendower, though conjured by parental partiality with ever ſo loud a voice,

Yet will they come when you do call for them?

That injudicious practice, therefore, cannot be too much diſcouraged, of endeavouring to create talents which do not exiſt in nature. *That their daughters ſhall learn every thing*, is ſo general a maternal maxim, that even unborn daughters, of whoſe expected abilities and conjectured faculties,

it is preſumed, no very accurate judgment can previouſly be formed, are yet predeſtined to this univerſality of accompliſhments. This comprehenſive maxim, thus almoſt univerſally brought into practice, at once weakens the general powers of the mind, by drawing off its ſtrength into too great a variety of directions; and cuts up time into too many portions, by ſplitting it into ſuch an endleſs multiplicity of employments. I know that I am treading on tender ground; but I cannot help thinking that the reſtleſs pains we take to cram up every little vacuity of life, by crowding one new thing upon another, rather creates a thirſt for novelty than knowledge; and is but a well-diſguiſed contrivance to anticipate the keeping us in after-life more effectually from converſing with ourſelves. The care taken to prevent *ennui* is but a creditable plan for promoting ſelf-ignorance. We run from one occupation to another, (I ſpeak of thoſe arts to which little intellect is applied,) with a view to lighten the preſſure of time; above all we fly to them to ſave us from our own thoughts; we fly to them to reſcue us from ourſelves; whereas were we thrown a little more on our own hands, we might at laſt be driven, by way of ſomething to do, to try to get acquainted with our own hearts; and though our being leſs abſorbed by this buſy trifling, which dignifies its inanity with the impoſing name of occupation, might render us ſomewhat more ſenſible of the tedium of life;

yet

yet might not this very ſenſation tend to quicken our purſuit of a better? For an awful thought here ſuggeſts itſelf. If life be ſo long that we are driven to ſet at work every engine to paſs away the tedioufneſs of time; how ſhall we do to get rid of the tedioufneſs of eternity? an eternity in which not one of the acquiſitions which life has been exhauſted in acquiring, will be of the leaſt uſe? Let not then the ſoul be ſtarved by feeding it on ſuch unſubſtantial aliment, for the mind can be no more nouriſhed by theſe empty huſks than the body can be fed with ideas and principles.

Among the boaſted improvements of the preſent age, none affords more frequent matter of peculiar exultation, than the manifeſt ſuperiority in the employments of the young ladies of our time over thoſe of the good houſewives of the laſt century. It is matter of general triumph that they are at preſent employed in learning the polite arts, or in acquiring liberal accompliſhments; while it is inſiſted that the others wore out their joyleſs days in adorning the manſion-houſe with hangings of hideous tapeſtry and diſfiguring tent-ſtitch. Moſt chearfully do I allow to the reigning modes their juſt claim of boaſted ſuperiority, for certainly there is no piety in bad taſte. Still, granting all the deformity of the exploded ornaments, one advantage attended them: the walls and floors were not vain of their decorations; and it is to be feared, that the little perſon-

perſon ſometimes is. The flattery beſtowed on the obſolete employments, for probably even *they* had their flatterers, furniſhed leſs aliment to ſelfiſhneſs, and leſs gratification to vanity; and the occupation itſelf was leſs likely to impair the delicacy and modeſty of the ſex than the exquiſite cultivation of perſonal accompliſhments or perſonal decorations; and every mode which keeps down vanity and keeps back *ſelf*, has at leaſt a moral uſe. For while one admires the elegant fingers of a young lady buſied in working or painting her ball dreſs, one cannot help ſuſpecting that her alacrity may be a little ſtimulated by the animating idea *how very well ſhe ſhall look in it*. Nor was the induſtrious matron of Ithaca more ſoothed at her ſolitary loom with the ſweet reflection that by her labour ſhe was gratifying her filial and conjugal feelings, than the pleaſure-loving damſel of Britain, is gratified by the anticipated admiration which her ingenuity is procuring for her beauty.

Might not this propenſity be a little checked, and an intereſting feeling be combined with her induſtry, were the fair artiſt habituated to exerciſe her ſkill in adorning ſome one elſe rather than herſelf? For it will add no lightneſs to the lighteſt head, nor vanity to the vaineſt heart, to ſolace her labours in reflecting how exceedingly the gown ſhe is working will become her mother. This ſuggeſtion, trifling as it may ſeem, of habituating young ladies to exerciſe their taſte and devote

devote their leiſure, not to the decoration of their own perſons, but to the ſervice of thoſe to whom they are bound by every tender tie, would not only help to repreſs vanity, but by thus aſſociating the idea of induſtry with that of filial affection, would promote, while it gratified, ſome of the beſt affections of the heart. The Romans (and it is mortifying on the ſubject of Chriſtian education to be driven ſo often to refer to the ſuperiority of Pagans) were ſo well aware of the importance of keeping up a ſenſe of family fondneſs and attachment by the very ſame means which promoted ſimple and domeſtic employment, that no citizen of note ever appeared in public in any garb but what was ſpun by his wife and daughter; and this virtuous faſhion was not confined to the days of republican ſeverity, but even in all the pomp and luxury of imperial power, Auguſtus preſerved in his own family this ſimplicity of primitive manners.

Let me be allowed to repeat, that I mean not with prepoſterous praiſe to deſcant on the ignorance or the prejudices of paſt times, nor abſurdly to regret that vulgar ſyſtem of education which rounded the little circle of female acquirements within the limits of the ſampler and the receipt-book. Yet if a preference almoſt excluſive was then given to what was merely uſeful, a preference almoſt equally excluſive alſo is now aſſigned to what is merely ornamental. And it muſt be owned, that if the life of a young lady, formerly,

too

too much reſembled the life of a confectioner, it now too much reſembles that of an actreſs; the morning is all rehearſal, and the evening is all performance: and thoſe who are trained in this regular routine, who are inſtructed in order to be exhibited, ſoon learn to feel a ſort of impatience in thoſe ſocieties in which *their* kind of talents are not likely to be brought into play; the taſk of an auditor becomes dull to her who has been uſed to be a performer. Eſteem and kindneſs become but cold ſubſtitutes to one who has been fed on plaudits and pampered with acclamations: and the exceſſive commendation which the viſitor is expected to pay for his entertainment not only keeps alive the flame of vanity in the artiſt by conſtant fuel, but is not ſeldom exacted at a price which a veracity at all ſtrict would grudge; but when a whole circle are obliged to be competitors who ſhall flatter moſt, it is not eaſy to be at once very ſincere and very civil. And unluckily, while the age is become ſo knowing and ſo faſtidious, that if a young lady does not play like a public performer, no one thinks her worth attending to; yet if ſhe does ſo excel, ſome of the ſobereſt of the admiring circle feel a ſtrong alloy to their pleaſure, on reflecting at what a vaſt expence of time this perfection muſt probably have been acquired *.

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* That accurate judge of the human heart, Madame de Maintenon, was ſo well aware of the danger reſulting from

The ſtudy of the fine arts, indeed, is forced on young perſons, with or without genius, (faſhion as was ſaid before having ſwallowed up that diſtinction,) to ſuch exceſs, as to vex, fatigue, and diſguſt thoſe who have no talents, and to determine them, as ſoon as they become free agents, to abandon all ſuch tormenting acquirements. While by this inceſſant compulſion ſtill more pernicious effects are often produced on thoſe who actually poſſeſs genius; for the natural conſtant reference in the mind to that public performance for which they are ſedulouſly cultivating this talent, excites the ſame paſſions of envy, vanity, and competition in the dilettanti performers, as might be ſuppoſed to ſtimulate profeſſional candidates for fame and profit at public games and theatrical exhibitions. Is this emulation, is this ſpirit of rivalry, is this hunger after public praiſe the temper which prudent parents would wiſh to excite and foſter? Beſides, in *any* event the iſſue is not favourable: if the young performers are timid, they diſgrace themſelves and diſtreſs their friends; if courageous, their boldneſs offends ſtill more than their bad performance. Shall they then be ſtudiouſly brought

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from ſome kinds of excellence, that after the young ladies of the Court of Louis Quatorze had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the performance of ſome dramatic pieces of Racine, when her friends told her how admirably they had played their parts; "Yes," anſwered this wiſe woman, "ſo admirably that they ſhall never play again."

brought into ſituations in which failure diſcredits and ſucceſs diſguſts?

May I venture, without being accuſed of pedantry, to conclude this chapter with another reference to Pagan example? The Hebrews, Egyptians, and Greeks, believed that they could more effectually teach their youth maxims of virtue, by calling in the aid of muſic and poetry; theſe maxims, therefore, they put into verſes, and theſe verſes were ſet to the moſt popular and ſimple tunes, which the children ſang; thus was their love of goodneſs excited by the very inſtruments of their pleaſure; and the ſenſes, the taſte, and the imagination, as it were, preſſed into the ſervice of religion and morals. Dare I appeal to Chriſtian parents, if theſe arts are commonly uſed by *them*, as ſubſidiary to religion and to a ſyſtem of morals much more worthy of every ingenious aid and aſſociation, which might tend to recommend them to the youthful mind? Dare I appeal to Chriſtian parents, whether muſic, which fills up no trifling portion of their daughters' time, does not fill it without any moral end, or even without any ſpecific object? Nay, whether ſome of the favourite ſongs of poliſhed ſocieties are not amatory, are not Anacreontic, more than quite become modeſt lips of innocent youth and delicate beauty?

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

On the religious employment of time.—On the manner in which holidays are paſſed.—Selfiſhneſs and inconſideration conſidered.—Dangers ariſing from the world.

THERE are many well-diſpoſed parents who while they attend to theſe faſhionable acquirements, do not neglect to infuſe religious knowledge into the minds of their children; and having done this, are but too apt to conclude that they have done all, and have fully acquitted themſelves of the important duties of education. For having, as they think, ſufficiently grounded them in religion, they do not ſcruple to allow their daughters to ſpend almoſt the whole of their time exactly like the daughters of worldly people. Now, though it be one great point gained, to have imbued their young minds with the beſt knowledge, the work is not therefore by any means accompliſhed. "What do ye more than "others?" is a queſtion which, in a more extended ſenſe, religious parents muſt be prepared to anſwer.

Such parents ſhould go on to teach children the religious uſe of time, the duty of conſecrating to God every talent, every faculty, every poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion, and of devoting their whole lives to his glory. People of piety ſhould be more peculiarly on their guard againſt a ſpirit of idleneſs, and a ſlovenly habitual waſting of time, becauſe this practice, by not aſſuming a palpable ſhape of guilt, carries little alarm to the conſcience. Even religious characters are in danger on this ſide; for not allowing themſelves to follow the world in its exceſſes and diverſions, they have conſequently more time upon their hands; and inſtead of dedicating the time ſo reſcued to its true purpoſes, they ſometimes make as it were compenſation to themſelves for their abſtinence from dangerous places of public reſort, by an habitual frivolouſneſs at home; by a ſuperabundance of unprofitable ſmall-talk, idle reading, and a quiet and dull frittering away of time. Their day perhaps has been more free from actual evil; but it will often be found to have been as unproductive as that of more worldly characters; and they will be found to have traded to as little purpoſe with their maſter's talents. But a Chriſtian muſt take care to keep his conſcience peculiarly alive to the unapparent, though formidable perils of unprofitableneſs.

To theſe, and to all, the author would earneſtly recommend to accuſtom their children to paſs at once from ſerious buſineſs to active and animated recreation; they ſhould carefully preſerve them from thoſe long and torpid intervals between both, that languid indolence and ſpiritleſs trifling

trifling, that merely getting rid of the day without ſtamping on it any characters of active goodneſs, or of intellectual profit, which wears out ſuch large portions of life in both young and old. It has, indeed, paſſed into an aphoriſm, that activity is neceſſary to virtue, even among thoſe who are not apprized that it is alſo indiſpenſable to happineſs. So far are many parents from being ſenſible of this truth, that vacations from ſchool are not merely allowed, but appointed to paſs away in weariſome ſauntering and indeterminate idleneſs, and this is done by erring tenderneſs by way of converting the holidays into pleaſure! Nay, the idleneſs is ſpecifically made over to the child's mind, as the ſtrongeſt expreſſion of the fondneſs of the parent! A diſlike to learning is thus ſyſtematically excited by prepoſterouſly erecting indolence into a reward for application! And the promiſe of doing nothing is held out as the ſtrongeſt temptation as well as beſt recompence for having done well!

Theſe and ſuch like errors of conduct ariſe from the latent but very operative principle of ſelfiſhneſs. This principle is obviouſly promoted by many habits and practices ſeemingly of little importance; and indeed ſelfiſhneſs is ſo commonly interwoven with vanity and inconſideration, that I have not always thought it neceſſary to mark the diſtinction. They are alternately cauſe and effect; and are produced and re-produced

duced by reciprocal operation. They are a joint confederacy who are mutually promoting each other's ſtrength and intereſt; they are united by almoſt inſeparable ties, and the indulgence of either is the gratification of all. Ill-judging tenderneſs is in fact only a concealed ſelf-love, which cannot bear to be witneſs to the uneaſineſs which a preſent diſappointment, or difficulty, or vexation, would cauſe to a darling child, but which yet does not ſcruple by improper gratification to ſtore up for it future miſeries, which the child will infallibly ſuffer, though it may be at a diſtant period which the ſelfiſh mother will be ſaved the pain of beholding.

Another principle ſomething different from this, though it may properly fall under the head of ſelfiſhneſs, ſeems to actuate ſome parents in their conduct towards their children: I mean, a certain ſlothfulneſs of mind, a love of eaſe, which impoſes a voluntary blindneſs, and makes them not chooſe to ſee what will give them trouble to combat. From the perſons in queſtion we frequently hear ſuch expreſſions as theſe: "Children will be children." "My children, "I ſuppoſe, are much like thoſe of other peo- "ple," &c. Thus we may obſerve this dangerous and deluſive principle frequently turning off with a ſmile from the firſt indications of thoſe tempers, which from their fatal tendency ought to be very ſeriouſly taken up. I would be underſtood now as ſpeaking to conſcientious parents

rents, who conſider it as a general duty to correct the faults of their children, but who, from this indolence of mind, are extremely backward in *diſcovering* ſuch faults, and are not very well pleaſed when they are pointed out by others. Such parents will do well to take notice that whatever they conſider it as a duty to *correct*, muſt be equally a duty to endeavour to *find out*. And this indolent love of eaſe is the more to be guarded againſt, as it not only leads parents into erroneous conduct towards their children, but is peculiarly dangerous to themſelves. It is a fault frequently cheriſhed from ignorance of its real character; for, not bearing on it the ſtrong features of deformity which mark many other vices, but on the contrary bearing ſome reſemblance to virtue, it is frequently miſtaken for the Chriſtian graces of patience, meekneſs, and forbearance, than which nothing can be more oppoſite; theſe proceeding from the Chriſtian principle of ſelf-denial, the other from ſelf-indulgence.

In this connection may I be permitted to remark on the practice at the tables of many families when the children are at home for the holidays; every delicacy is forced upon them, with the tempting remark, "that they cannot have "this or that dainty at ſchool;" and they are indulged in irregular hours for the ſame motive, "becauſe they cannot have that indulgence at "ſchool." Thus the natural ſeeds of idleneſs, ſenſuality,

ſenſuality, and ſloth, are at once cheriſhed, by converting the periodical viſit at home into a ſeaſon of intemperance, late hours, and exemption from ſtudy; ſo that children are habituated, at an age when laſting aſſociations are formed in the mind, to connect the idea of ſtudy with that of hardſhip, of happineſs with gluttony, and of pleaſure with loitering, feaſting, or ſleeping. Would it not be better to make them combine the delightful idea of home, with the gratification of the ſocial affections, the fondneſs of maternal love, the kindneſs, and warmth, and confidence of the ſweet domeſtic attachments,

——And all the charities
Of father, ſon, and brother?

I will venture to ſay, that thoſe liſtleſs and vacant days, when the thoughts have no preciſe object; when the imagination has nothing to ſhape; when induſtry has no definite purſuit; when the mind and the body have no exerciſe, and the ingenuity no acquiſition either to anticipate or to enjoy, are the longeſt, the dulleſt, and the leaſt happy, which children of ſpirit and genius ever paſs. Yes! it is a few ſhort but keen and lively intervals of animated pleaſure, ſnatched from between the ſucceſſive labours and duties of a buſy day, looked forward to with hope, enjoyed with taſte, and recollected without remorſe, which, both to men and to children, yield the trueſt portions of enjoyment. O ſnatch your offſpring from adding to the number of thoſe objects

jects of ſupreme commiſeration, who ſeek their happineſs in doing nothing! The animal may be gratified by it, but the man is degraded. Life is but a ſhort day; but it is a working day. Activity *may* lead to evil; but inactivity *cannot* be led to good.

Young ladies ſhould alſo be accuſtomed to ſet apart a fixed portion of their time, as ſacred to the poor*, whether in relieving, inſtructing, or working for them; and the performance of this duty muſt not be left to the event of contingent circumſtances, or the operation of accidental impreſſions; but it muſt be eſtabliſhed into a principle, and wrought into a habit. A ſpecific portion of the day muſt be allotted to it, on which no common engagement muſt be allowed to intrench. Thoſe periods of time, which are not *ſtated*, are ſeldom turned to their proper uſe; and nothing ſhort of a regular plan inſures the conſcientious

* It would be a noble employment, and well becoming the tenderneſs of their ſex, if ladies were to conſider the ſuperintendance of the poor as their immediate office. They are peculiarly fitted for it; for from their own habits of life they are more intimately acquainted with domeſtic wants than the other ſex; and in certain inſtances of ſickneſs and ſuffering peculiar to themſelves, they ſhould be expected to have more ſympathy; and they have obviouſly more leiſure. There is a certain religious ſociety, diſtinguiſhed by the ſimplicity of their dreſs, manners, and language, whoſe poor are perhaps better taken care of than any other; and one reaſon may be, that they are immediately under the inſpection of the women.

ſcientious diſcharge of any duty. This will help to furniſh a powerful remedy for that ſelfiſhneſs whoſe ſtrong holds, the truth cannot be too often repeated, it is the grand buſineſs of Chriſtian education perpetually to attack. If we were but aware how much better it makes ourſelves to wiſh to ſee others better, and to aſſiſt in making them ſo, we ſhould find that the good done would be of as much importance by the habit it would induce in our own minds, as by its beneficial effects on the objects of our kindneſs*.

In what relates to pecuniary bounty, it will be requiring of young perſons a very ſmall ſacrifice, if you teach them merely to give that money to the poor which properly belongs not to the child but to the parent; this ſort of charity commonly ſubtracts little from their own pleaſures, eſpecially when what they have beſtowed is immediately made up to them, as a reward for their little fit of generoſity. They will, on this plan, ſoon learn to give, not only for praiſe but for profit. The ſacrifice of an orange to a little girl, or a feather to a great one, given at the expence of their

* In addition to the inſtruction of the individual poor, and the ſuperintendance of charity ſchools, ladies might be highly uſeful in aſſiſting the parochial clergy in the adoption of that excellent plan for the inſtruction of the ignorant ſuggeſted by the Biſhop of Durham in his laſt admirable charge to his clergy. It is with pleaſure the author is enabled to add that the ſcheme has actually been adopted with good effect in that extenſive dioceſe.

their own gratification, would be a better leſſon of charity on its right ground, than a conſiderable ſum of money to be preſently replaced by the parent. And it would be habituating them early to combine two ideas which ought never to be ſeparated, charity and ſelf-denial.

As an antidote to ſelfiſhneſs, as well as to pride and indolence, they ſhould alſo very early be taught to perform all the little offices in their power for themſelves; not to be inſolently exerciſing their ſuppoſed prerogative of rank and wealth, by calling for ſervants where there is no real occaſion; above all, they ſhould be accuſtomed to conſider the domeſtics' hours of meals and reſt as almoſt ſacred, and the golden rule ſhould be practically and uniformly enforced, even on ſo trifling an occaſion as ringing a bell through mere wantonneſs, or ſelf-love, or pride.

To check the growth of inconſiderateneſs, young ladies ſhould early be taught to diſcharge their little debts with punctuality. They ſhould be made ſenſible of the cruelty of obliging trades-people to call often for the money due to them; and of hindering and detaining thoſe whoſe time is the ſource of their ſubſiſtence, under pretence of ſome frivolous engagement, which ought to be made to bend to the comfort and advantage of others. They ſhould conſcientiouſly allow ſufficient time for the execution of their orders; and with a Chriſtian circumſpection, be careful not to drive work-people, by

needleſs hurry, into loſing their reſt, or breaking the Sabbath. I have known a lady give her gown to a mantua-maker on the Saturday night, to whom ſhe would not for the world ſay in ſo many words, "You muſt work through the "whole of Sunday," while ſhe was virtually compelling her to do ſo, by an injunction to bring the gown home finiſhed on the Monday morning, on pain of her diſpleaſure. To theſe hardſhips numbers are continually driven by good-natured but inconſiderate employers. As theſe petty exactions of inconſideration furniſh alſo a conſtant aliment to ſelfiſhneſs, let not a deſire to counteract them be conſidered as leading to too minute details; nothing is too frivolous for animadverſion, which tends to fix a bad habit in the ſuperior, or to wound the feelings of the dependant.

Would it not be turning thoſe political doctrines, which are now ſo warmly agitating, to a truly moral account, and give the beſt practical anſwer to the popular declamations on the inequality of human conditions, were the rich carefully to inſtruct their children to ſoften that inevitable inequality by the mildneſs and tenderneſs of their behaviour to their inferiors? This diſpenſation of God, which excites ſo many murmurs, would, were it thus practically improved, tend to eſtabliſh the glory of that Being who is now ſo often reviled for his injuſtice; for God himſelf is covertly attacked in many of the invectives

vectives againſt laws and governments, and the ſuppoſed arbitrary and unjuſt diſproportion of ranks.

This diſpenſation, thus properly improved, would at once call into exerciſe the generoſity, kindneſs, and forbearance of the ſuperior; and the patience, reſignation, and gratitude of the inferior: and thus, while we were vindicating the *ways* of Providence, we ſhould be accompliſhing his *plan*, by bringing into action thoſe virtues of both claſſes which would have had little exerciſe had there been no inequality in ſtation and fortune. Thoſe who are ſo zealouſly contending for the privileges of rank and power, ſhould never loſe ſight of the religious duties and conſiderate virtues which the poſſeſſion of rank and power impoſes on themſelves; duties and virtues which ſhould ever be inſeparable from thoſe privileges. As the inferior claſſes have little real right to complain of *laws*, in this reſpect let the great be watchful to give them as little cauſe to complain of *manners*. In order to this, let them carefully train up their children to ſupply by individual kindneſs thoſe caſes of hardſhip which laws cannot reach; let them obviate, by an active and well-directed compaſſion, thoſe imperfections of which the beſt conſtructed human inſtitutions muſt unavoidably partake; and, by the exerciſe of private bounty, early inculcated, ſoften thoſe diſtreſſes which can never come under the cognizance of government. Let them teach their

offspring, that the charity of the rich ſhould ever be ſubſidiary to the public proviſion in thoſe numberleſs inſtances to which the moſt equal laws cannot apply. By ſuch means every leſſon of politics may be converted into a leſſon of piety; and a ſpirit of condeſcending love might win over ſome, whom a ſpirit of invective will only inflame.

It can never be too often repeated, that one of the great objects of education is the forming of habits. Among the inſtances of negligence into which even religiouſly diſpoſed parents and teachers are apt to fall, one is, that they are not ſufficiently attentive in finding intereſting employment for the Sunday. They do not make a ſcruple of ſometimes allowing their children to fill up the intervals of public worſhip with their ordinary employments and common ſchool exerciſes. They are not aware that they are thus training their offspring to an early and a ſyſtematic profanation of the Sabbath by this cuſtom; for to children, their taſks are their buſineſs; to them a French or Latin exerciſe is as ſerious an occupation as the exerciſe of a trade or profeſſion is to a man; and if they are allowed to think the one right *now*, they will not be brought hereafter to think that the other is wrong; for the opinions and practices fixed at this early ſeaſon are not eaſily altered; and an early habit becomes rooted into an inveterate prejudice. By this overſight even the friends of religion

religion may be contributing eventually to that abolition of the Lord's day, ſo devoutly wiſhed and ſo indefatigably laboured after by its enemies, as the deſired preliminary to the deſtruction of whatever is moſt dear to Chriſtians.—What obſtruction would it offer to the general progreſs of youth, if all their Sunday exerciſes (which, with reading, compoſing, tranſcribing, and getting by heart, might be extended to an entertaining variety) were adapted to the peculiar nature of the day? It is not meant to impoſe on them ſuch rigorous ſtudy as ſhall convert the day they ſhould be taught to love into a day of burdens and hardſhips, or to abridge ſuch innocent enjoyments as are compatible with a ſeaſon of holy reſt; but it is intended merely to ſuggeſt that there ſhould be a marked diſtinction in the nature of their employments and ſtudies; for on the obſervance or neglect of this, as was before obſerved, their future notions and principles will in a good degree be formed. The Goſpel, in reſcuing the Lord's day from the rigorous bondage of the Jewiſh Sabbath, never leſſened the obligation to keep it holy, nor meant to ſanction any ſecular occupation. Chriſtianity in lightening its auſterities has not defeated the end of its inſtitution; in purifying its ſpirit, it has not aboliſhed its object.

Though the author, chiefly writing with a view to domeſtic inſtruction, has purpoſely avoided entering on the diſputed queſtion whether

ther a ſchool or home education be beſt; a queſtion which perhaps muſt generally be decided by the ſtate of the individual home, and the ſtate of the individual ſchool; yet ſhe begs leave to ſuggeſt one remark, which peculiarly belongs to a ſchool education; namely, the general habit of converting the Sunday into a viſiting day by way of gaining time; as if the appropriate inſtructions of the Lord's day were the cheapeſt ſacrifice which could be made to pleaſure. Even in thoſe ſchools, in which religion is conſidered as an indiſpenſable part of inſtruction, this kind of inſtruction is almoſt excluſively limited to Sundays: how then are girls ever to make any progreſs in this moſt important article, if they are habituated to loſe the religious advantages of the ſchool, for the ſake of having more dainties for dinner abroad? This remark cannot be ſuppoſed to apply to the viſits which children make to religious parents, and indeed it only applies to thoſe caſes where the ſchool is a conſcientious ſchool, and the viſit a trifling viſit.

Among other ſubjects which engroſs a good ſhare of worldly converſation, one of the moſt attracting is beauty. Many ladies have often a random way of talking rapturouſly on the general importance and the faſcinating power of beauty, who are yet prudent enough to be very unwilling to let their own daughters find out they are handſome. Perhaps the contrary courſe might be ſafer. If the little liſtener were not conſtantly

conſtantly hearing that beauty is the beſt gift, ſhe would not be ſo vain from fancying herſelf to be the beſt gifted. Be leſs ſolicitous, therefore, to conceal from her a ſecret which with all your watchfulneſs ſhe will be ſure to find out, without your telling; but rather ſeek to lower the general value of beauty in her eſtimation. Uſe your daughter in all things to a different ſtandard from that of the world. It is not by vulgar people and ſervants only that ſhe will be told of her being pretty. She will be hearing it not only from gay ladies, but from grave men; ſhe will be hearing it from the whole world around her. The antidote to the preſent danger is not now to be ſearched for; it muſt be already operating; it muſt have been provided for in the foundation laid in the general principle ſhe had been imbibing, before this particular temptation of beauty came in queſtion. And this general principle is an habitual indifference to flattery. She muſt have learnt not to be intoxicated by the praiſe of the world. She muſt have learnt to eſtimate things by their intrinſic worth, rather than by the world's eſtimation. Speak to her with particular kindneſs and commendation of plain but amiable girls; mention with compaſſion ſuch as are handſome but ill-educated; ſpeak caſually of ſome who were once thought pretty, but have ceaſed to be good; make uſe of the arguments ariſing from the

the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of beauty, as ſtrong additional reaſons for making that which is little valuable in itſelf, ſtill leſs valuable. As it is a *new* idea which is always dangerous, you may thus break the force of this danger by allowing her an early introduction to this inevitable knowledge, which would become more intereſting, and of courſe more perilous by every additional year: and if you can guard againſt that fatal and almoſt univerſal error of letting her ſee that ſhe is more loved on account of her beauty, her familiarity with the idea may be leſs dangerous than its novelty afterwards would prove.

But the great and conſtant peril to which young perſons in the higher walks of life are expoſed, is the prevailing turn and ſpirit of general converſation. Even the children of better families, who are well inſtructed when at their ſtudies, are yet at other times continually beholding the WORLD ſet up in the higheſt and moſt advantageous point of view. Seeing the world! knowing the world! ſtanding well with the world! making a figure in the world! is ſpoken of as including the whole ſum and ſubſtance of human advantages. They hear their education almoſt excluſively alluded to with reference to the *figure* it will enable them to make in the world. In almoſt all companies they hear all that the world admires ſpoken of with admiration; rank flattered, fame coveted, power ſought, beauty idolized, money conſidered as the

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one thing needful, and as the atoning ſubſtitute for the want of all other things; profit held up as the reward of virtue, and worldly eſtimation as the juſt and higheſt prize of laudable ambition; and after the very ſpirit of the world has been thus habitually infuſed into them all the week, one cannot expect much effect from their being coldly and cuſtomarily told now and then on Sundays, that they muſt not "love the "world, nor the things of the world." To tell them once in ſeven days that it is a ſin to gratify an appetite which you have been whetting and ſtimulating the preceding ſix, is to require from them a power of ſelf-control, which our knowledge of the impetuoſity of the paſſions, eſpecially in early age, ſhould have taught us is impoſſible.

This is not the place to animadvert on the uſual miſapplication of the phraſe, "knowing "the world;" which term is commonly applied, in the way of panegyric, to keen, deſigning, ſelfiſh, ambitious men, who ſtudy mankind in order to turn them to their own account. But in the true ſenſe of the expreſſion, the ſenſe which Chriſtian parents would wiſh to impreſs on their children, to know the world is to know its emptineſs, its vanity, its futility, and its wickedneſs. To know it is to deſpiſe it, to be on our guard againſt, to labour to live above it; and in this view an obſcure Chriſtian in a village may be ſaid to know the world better than a

hoary courtier or wily politician; for how can they be ſaid to *know* it, who go on to love it, to value it, to be led captive by its allurements, to give their ſoul in exchange for its lying promiſes?

But while ſo falſe an eſtimate is often made in faſhionable ſociety of the real value of things; that is, while Chriſtianity does *not* furniſh the ſtandard, and human opinion *does*; while the multiplying our deſires is conſidered as a ſymptom of elegance, though to ſubdue thoſe deſires is made the grand criterion of religion; while moderation is beheld as indicating a poorneſs of ſpirit, though to that very poverty of ſpirit the higheſt promiſe of the Goſpel is aſſigned; while worldly wiſdom is ſedulouſly enjoined by worldly friends, in contradiction to that aſſertion, "that the wiſdom of the world is fooliſhneſs "with God;" while the praiſe of man is to be anxiouſly ſought in oppoſition to that aſſurance, that "the fear of man worketh a ſnare;" while they are taught all the week that "the friend-"ſhip of the world" is the wiſeſt purſuit, and on Sundays that "it is enmity againſt God;" while theſe things are ſo, and that they are ſo in a good degree who will undertake to deny? may we not venture to affirm that a Chriſtian education, though it be not an impoſſible, is yet a very difficult work?

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

Filial obedience not the character of the age.—A comparison with the preceding age in this respect.—Those who cultivate the mind advised to study the nature of the soil.—Unpromising children often make strong characters.—Teachers too apt to devote their pains almost exclusively to children of parts.

AMONG the real improvements of modern times, and they are not a few, it is to be feared that the growth of filial obedience cannot be included. Who can forbear observing and regretting in a variety of instances, that not only sons but daughters have adopted something of that spirit of independence, and disdain of control which characterise the times? And is it not too generally obvious that domestic manners are not slightly tinctured with the prevailing hue of public principles? The *rights of man* have been discussed, till we are somewhat wearied with the discussion. To these have been opposed, as the next stage in the progress of illumination, and with more presumption than prudence, *the rights of woman*. It follows, according to the natural progression of human things, that the next influx of

of that irradiation which our enlighteners are pouring in upon us will illuminate the world with grave deſcants on the *rights of youth*, on the *rights of children*, on the *rights of babies!*

This revolutionary ſpirit in families ſuggeſts the remark, that among the faults with which it has been too much the faſhion of recent times to load the memory of the incomparable Milton, one of the charges brought againſt his private character (for with his political character we have here nothing to do) has been, that he was ſo ſevere a father as to have compelled his daughters, after he was blind, to read aloud to him, for his ſole pleaſure, Greek and Latin authors of which they did not underſtand a word. But this is in fact nothing more than an inſtance of the ſtrict domeſtic regulations of the age in which Milton lived; and ſhould not be brought forward as a proof of the ſeverity of his individual temper. Nor indeed in any caſe ſhould it ever be conſidered as an hardſhip for an affectionate child to amuſe an afflicted parent, even though it ſhould be attended with a heavier ſacrifice of her own pleaſure than that produced in the preſent inſtance*.

Is

* In ſpite of this too prevailing ſpirit, and at a time when, by an inverted ſtate of ſociety, ſacrifices of eaſe and pleaſure are rather exacted by children from parents, than required of parents from children, numberleſs inſtances might be adduced of filial affection truly honourable

Is the author then inculcating the harſh doctrine of paternal auſterity? By no means. It drives the gentle ſpirit to artifice, and the rugged to deſpair. It generates deceit and cunning, the moſt hopeleſs and hateful in the whole catalogue of female failings. Ungoverned anger in the teacher, and inability to diſcriminate between venial errors and premeditated offence, though they may lead a timid creature to hide wrong tempers, or to conceal bad actions, will not help her to ſubdue the one or correct the other. The dread of ſeverity will drive terrified children to ſeek, not for reformation, but for impunity. A readineſs to forgive them promotes frankneſs; and we ſhould, above all things, encourage them to be frank, in order to come at their faults. They have not more faults for being open, they only *diſcover* more; and to know the worſt of the character we have to regulate will enable us to make it better.

Diſcipline,

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able to the preſent period. And the author records with pleaſure, that ſhe has ſeen amiable young ladies of high rank conducting the ſteps of a blind but illuſtrious parent with true filial fondneſs; and has often contemplated, in another family, the intereſting attentions of daughters who were both hands and eyes to an infirm and nearly blind father. It is but juſtice to add, that theſe examples are not taken from that middle rank of life which Milton filled, but from the daughters of the higheſt officers in the ſtate.

Diſcipline, however, is not cruelty, and reſtraint is not ſeverity. We muſt ſtrengthen the feeble, while we repel the bold. We cannot educate by a *receipt*; for after ſtudying the beſt rules, and after digeſting them into a ſyſtem, much muſt depend on contingent circumſtances; for that which is good may yet be inapplicable. The cultivator of the human mind muſt, like the gardener, ſtudy diverſities of ſoil, or he may plant diligently and water faithfully with little fruit. The ſkilful labourer knows that even where the ſurface is not particularly promiſing, there is often a rough ſtrong ground which will amply repay the trouble of breaking it up; yet we are often moſt taken with a ſoft ſurface, though it conceal a ſhallow depth, becauſe it promiſes preſent reward and little trouble. But ſtrong and pertinacious tempers, of which perhaps obſtinacy is the leading vice, under ſkilful management often turn out ſteady and ſterling characters; while from ſofter clay a firm and vigorous virtue is but ſeldom produced. Pertinacity is often principle, which wants nothing but to be led to its true object; while the uniformly yielding, and univerſally accommodating ſpirit, is not ſeldom the reſult of a feeble tone of morals, of a temper eager for praiſe, and acting for reward.

But theſe revolutions in character cannot be effected by mere education. Plutarch has obſerved that the medical ſcience would never be brought

brought to perfection till poiſons ſhould be converted into phyſic. What our late improvers in natural ſcience have done in the medical world, by converting the moſtly deadly ingredients into inſtruments of life and health, Chriſtianity with a ſort of divine alchymy has effected in the moral world, by that tranſmutation which makes thoſe paſſions which have been working for ſin become active in the cauſe of religion. The violent temper of Saul of Tarſus, which was "exceed-"ingly mad" againſt the ſaints of God, did God ſee fit to convert into that burning zeal which enabled Paul the Apoſtle to labour ſo unremittingly for the converſion of the Gentile world. Chriſtianity indeed does not ſo much give us new affections or faculties, as give a new direction to thoſe we already have. She changes that ſorrow of the world which worketh death into "godly ſorrow which worketh repentance." She changes our anger againſt the perſons we diſlike into hatred of their ſins. "The fear of "man which worketh a ſnare," ſhe tranſmutes into "that fear of God which worketh ſalva-"tion." That religion does not extinguiſh the paſſions, but only alters their object, the animated expreſſions of the fervid Apoſtle confirm —"Yea, what *fearfulneſs*; yea, what *clearing* "*of yourſelves*; yea, what *indignation*; yea, "what *fear*; yea, what *vehement deſire*; yea, "what *zeal*; yea, what *revenge** !"

Thus,

* 2 Corinthians, vii. 11.

Thus, by ſome of the moſt troubleſome paſſions of our nature being converted by the bleſſing of God on a religious education to the ſide of virtue, a double purpoſe is effected. Becauſe, if I may be allowed to change the metaphor, it is the character of the paſſions never to obſerve a neutrality. If they are no longer rebels, they become auxiliaries; and the acceſſion of ſtrength is doubled, becauſe a foe ſubdued is an ally obtained. For it is the effect of religion on the paſſions, that when ſhe ſeizes the enemy's garriſon, ſhe does not content herſelf with defeating its future miſchiefs; ſhe does not deſtroy the works, ſhe does not burn the arſenal and ſpike the cannon; but the artillery ſhe ſeizes, ſhe turns to her own uſe; ſhe attacks in her turn, and plants its whole force againſt the enemy from whom ſhe has taken it.

But while I would deprecate harſhneſs, I would enforce diſcipline; and that not merely on the ground of religion, but of happineſs alſo. One reaſon, not ſeldom brought forward by tender but miſtaken mothers as an apology for their unbounded indulgence, eſpecially to weakly children, is, that they probably will not live to enjoy the world when grown up, and that therefore they would not abridge the little pleaſure they may enjoy at preſent, leſt they ſhould be taken out of the world without having taſted any enjoyment. But a ſlight degree of obſervation would prove that this is an error in judgment

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as well as in principle. For, omitting any conſiderations reſpecting their future welfare, and entering only into their immediate intereſts; it is an indiſputable fact that children who know no control, whoſe faults encounter no contradiction, and whoſe humours experience conſtant indulgence, grow more irritable and capricious, invent wants, create deſires, loſe all reliſh for the pleaſures which they know they may reckon upon; and become perhaps more miſerable than even thoſe unfortunate children who labour under the more obvious and more commiſerated misfortune of ſuffering under the tyranny of unkind parents.

An early habitual reſtraint is peculiarly important to the future character and happineſs of women. A judicious, unrelaxing, but ſteady and gentle curb on their tempers and paſſions can alone enſure their peace and eſtabliſh their principles. It is a habit which cannot be adopted too ſoon, nor perſiſted in too pertinaciouſly. They ſhould when very young be enured to contradiction. Inſtead of hearing their *bonmots* treaſured up and repeated till the gueſts are tired, and till the children begin to think it dull, when they themſelves are not the little heroine of the theme, they ſhould be accuſtomed to receive but little praiſe for their vivacity or their wit, though they ſhould receive juſt commendation for their patience, their induſtry, their humility, and other qualities which have more worth than

ſplendour.

ſplendour. They ſhould be led to diſtruſt their own judgment; they ſhould learn not to murmur at expoſtulation; they ſhould be accuſtomed to expect and to endure oppoſition. It is a leſſon with which the world will not fail to furniſh them; and they will not practiſe it the worſe for having learnt it the ſooner. It is of the laſt importance to their happineſs even in this life that they ſhould early acquire a ſubmiſſive temper and a forbearing ſpirit. They muſt even endure to be thought wrong ſometimes, when they cannot but feel they are right. And while they ſhould be anxiouſly aſpiring to do well, they muſt not expect always to obtain the praiſe of having done ſo. But while a gentle demeanour is inculcated, let them not be inſtructed to practiſe gentleneſs merely on the low ground of its being decorous, and feminine, and pleaſing, and calculated to attract human favour: but let them be carefully taught to cultivate it on the high principle of obedience to Chriſt; on the practical ground of labouring after conformity to HIM, who, when he propoſed himſelf as a perfect pattern of imitation, did not ſay, Learn of me, for I am great, or wiſe, or mighty, but "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly:" and graciouſly promiſed that the reward ſhould accompany the practice, by encouragingly adding, "and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls." Do not teach them humility on the ordinary ground that vanity is *unamiable*, and that no one will *love* them

them if they are proud; for that will only go to correct the exterior, and make them ſoft and ſmiling hypocrites. But inform them, that "God reſiſteth the proud," while "them that "are meek he ſhall guide in judgment, and ſuch "as are gentle, them ſhall he teach his way." In theſe, as in all other caſes, an habitual attention to the *motives* ſhould be carefully ſubſtituted in their young hearts, in the place of too much anxiety about the *event* of actions. Principles, aims, and intentions ſhould be invariably inſiſted on, as the only true ground of right practice, and they ſhould be carefully guarded againſt too much ſolicitude for that human praiſe which attaches to appearances as much as to realities, to ſucceſs more than to deſert.

Let me repeat, without incurring the cenſure of tautology, that it will be of vaſt importance not to let ſlip the earlieſt occaſions of working gentle manners into an habit on their only true foundation, Chriſtian meekneſs. For this purpoſe I would again urge your calling in the example of our Redeemer in aid of his precepts. Endeavour to make your pupil feel that all the wonders exhibited in his life do not ſo overwhelm the awakened heart with rapture, love, and aſtoment, as the perpetual inſtances of his humility and meekneſs, with which the Goſpel abounds. Stupendous miracles, exerciſes of infinite power prompted by infinite mercy, are actions which

we ſhould naturally enough conceive as growing out of omnipotence and divine perfection: but ſilence under cruel mockings, patience under reproach, gentleneſs of demeanor under unparalleled injuries; theſe are perfections of which unaſſiſted nature not only has no conception in a Divine Being, but at which it would revolt, had not the reality been exemplified by our perfect pattern. Healing the ſick, feeding the multitude, reſtoring the blind, raiſing the dead, are deeds of which we could form ſome adequate idea, as neceſſarily flowing from Almighty goodneſs: but to waſh his diſciples' feet,—to preach the Goſpel to the *poor*,—to renounce not only eaſe, for that heroes have done on human motives,—but to renounce praiſe, to forgive his perſecutors, to love his enemies, to pray for his murderers with his laſt breath;—theſe are things which, while they compel us to cry out with the Centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God," ſhould remind us alſo, that they are not only *adorable* but *imitable* parts of his character. Theſe are not ſpeculative doctrines which he came to preach to Chriſtians, but living duties which he meant to entail on them; ſymbols of their profeſſion; teſts of their diſcipleſhip. Theſe are perfections which we are not barely to contemplate with holy awe and diſtant admiration, as if they were reſtricted to the *divine* nature of our Redeemer; but we muſt conſider them as ſuited to the human nature alſo, which he condeſcended to participate;

participate; in *contemplating*, we muſt *imitate*; in admiring, we muſt practiſe; and in our meaſure and degree go and do likewiſe. Elevate your thoughts for one moment to this ſtandard, (and you ſhould never allow yourſelf to be contented with a lower,) and then go, if you can, and teach your children to be mild, and ſoft, and gentle on worldly grounds, on human motives, as an external attraction, as a decoration to their ſex, as an appendage to their rank, as an expreſſion of their good breeding.

An early habit of reſtraint ſhould be gently but ſteadily exerciſed over all their appetites and tempers. She who has been uſed to ſet bounds to her deſires as a general principle, will moderate her fondneſs for dreſs; while this ſeemingly little circumſtance, if neglected, and the oppoſite habit formed, may be the firſt ſtep to every ſucceſſive error and every conſequent diſtreſs. Thoſe women who are ruined by ſeduction in the lower claſſes, and thoſe who are made miſerable by ambitious marriages in the higher, will be more frequently found to owe their miſery to an ungoverned paſſion for dreſs and ſhew, than to motives more apparently bad.

There is a cuſtom among teachers, which is not the more right for being common; they are apt to beſtow an undue proportion of pains on children of the beſt capacity, as if only geuinſes were worthy of attention. They ſhould reflect that in moderate talents, carefully cultivated, we

are perhaps to look for the chief happineſs and virtue of ſociety. If ſuperlative genius had been generally neceſſary, its exiſtence would not have been ſo rare; for omnipotence could eaſily have made thoſe talents common which we now conſider as extraordinary, had they been neceſſary to the perfection of his plan. Beſides, while we are conſcientiouſly inſtructing children of moderate capacity, it is a comfort to reflect, that if no labour will raiſe them to a high degree in the ſcale of intellectual diſtinction, yet they may be led on to perfection in that road in which "a way-faring man, though ſimple, ſhall not err." And when a mother feels diſpoſed to repine that her family is not likely to exhibit a groupe of future wits and growing beauties, let her conſole herſelf by looking abroad into the world, where ſhe will quickly perceive that the monopoly of happineſs is not engroſſed by beauty, nor that of virtue by genius.

Perhaps mediocrity of parts was decreed to be the ordinary lot, by way of furniſhing a ſtimulus to induſtry, and ſtrengthening the motives to virtuous application. For is it not obvious that moderate abilities, carefully carried to that meaſure of perfection of which they are capable, often enable their poſſeſſors to outſtrip, in the race of knowledge and of uſefulneſs, their more brilliant but leſs perſevering competitors? It is with mental endowments, as with other rich gifts of Providence; the inhabitant of the luxuriant ſouthern

ſouthern clime, where Nature has done every thing in the way of vegetation, indolently lays hold on this very fertility which ſhould animate his exertions as a plea for doing nothing himſelf; ſo that the ſoil which teems with ſuch encouraging abundance, leaves the favoured poſſeſſor idle, and comparatively poor; while the native of the leſs genial region, ſupplying by his labours the deficiencies of his lot, overtakes his more favoured competitor; by ſubſtituting induſtry for opulence, he improves the riches of his native land beyond that which is bleſſed with warmer ſuns, and thus vindicates Providence from the charge of partial diſtribution.

A girl who has docility will ſeldom be found to want underſtanding ſufficient for all the purpoſes of a uſeful, a happy, and a pious life. And it is as wrong for parents to ſet out with too ſanguine a dependence on the figure their children are to make in life, as it is unreaſonable to be diſcouraged at every diſappointment. Want of ſucceſs is ſo far from furniſhing a motive for relaxing their energy, that it is a reaſon for redoubling it. Let them ſuſpect their own plans, and reform them; let them diſtruſt their own principles, and correct them. The generality of parents do too little; ſome do much, and miſs their reward, becauſe they look not to any ſtrength beyond their own: after much is done, much will remain undone; for the entire regulation of the heart and affections is not the

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work of education alone, but is effected by the operation of divine grace. Will it be accounted enthuſiaſm to ſuggeſt, "that the fervent effectual "prayer of a righteous *parent* availeth much?" and to obſerve that perhaps the reaſon why ſo many anxious mothers fail of ſucceſs is, becauſe they repoſe with confidence in their own ſkill and labour, without looking to HIM without whoſe bleſſing they do but labour in vain?

On the other hand, is it not to be feared that ſome pious parents have fallen into an error of an oppoſite kind? From a full conviction that human endeavours are vain, and that it is God alone who can change the heart, they are earneſt in their prayers but not ſo earneſt in their endeavours. Such parents ſhould be reminded, that if they do not add their exertions to their prayers, their children are not likely to be more benefited than the children of thoſe who do not add their prayers to their exertions. What God has joined, let not man preſume to ſeparate. It *is* the work of God, we readily acknowledge, to implant religion in the heart, and to maintain it there as a ruling principle of conduct. And is it not the ſame God which cauſes the corn to grow? Are not our natural lives conſtantly preſerved by his power? Who will deny that in him we live, and move, and have our being? But how are theſe works of God carried on? By *means* which he has appointed. By the labour of the huſbandman the corn is made to grow:

grow: by food the body is ſuſtained: and by religious inſtruction God is pleaſed to work upon the human heart. As far as *we* ſee of the ways of God, all his works are carried on by *means*. It becomes therefore our duty to uſe the means, and truſt in God; to remember that God will not work without the means; and that the means can effect nothing without his bleſſing. "Paul may "plant and Apollos water, but it is God muſt give "the increaſe." But to what does he give the increaſe? To the *exertions* of Paul and Apollos. It is never ſaid, becauſe God only can give the increaſe, that Paul and Apollos may ſpare their labour.

It is one grand object to give the young probationer juſt and ſober views of the world on which ſhe is about to enter. Inſtead of making her boſom bound at the near proſpect of emancipation from her inſtructors; inſtead of teaching her young heart to dance with premature flutterings as the critical winter draws near in which *ſhe is to come out*; inſtead of raiſing a tumult in her buſy imagination at the approach of her firſt *grown up ball*, an event held out as forming the firſt grand epocha of female life, as the period from which a freſh computation fixing the pleaſures and independence of womanhood is to be dated; inſtead of this, endeavour to convince her, that the world will not turn out to be that ſcene of unvarying and never-ending delights which ſhe has perhaps been led to expect,

not only from the ſanguine temper and warm ſpirits natural to youth, but from the value ſhe has ſeen put on thoſe ſhowy accompliſhments which have too probably been fitting her for her exhibition in life. Teach her that this world is not a ſtage for the diſplay of ſuperficial or even of ſhining talents, but for the ſtrict and ſober exerciſe of fortitude, temperance, meekneſs, faith, diligence, and ſelf-denial; of her due performance of which Chriſtian graces, Angels will be ſpectators, and God the judge. Teach her that human life is not a ſplendid romance, ſpangled over with brilliant adventures, and enriched with extraordinary occurrences, and diverſified with wonderful incidents; lead her not to expect that it will abound with ſcenes which will call extraordinary qualities and wonderful powers into perpetual action; and for which if ſhe acquit herſelf well ſhe will be rewarded with proportionate fame and certain commendation. But apprize her that human life is a true hiſtory, many paſſages of which will be dull, obſcure, and unintereſting; ſome perhaps tragical; but that whatever gay incidents and pleaſing ſcenes may be interſperſed in the progreſs of the piece, yet finally "one "event happeneth to all;" to all there is one awful and infallible cataſtrophe. Apprize her that the eſtimation which mankind forms of merit is not always juſt, nor is its praiſe very exactly proportioned to deſert; tell her that the world weighs actions in far different ſcales from "the balance of the ſanctuary," and eſtimates worth

worth by a far different ſtandard from that of the goſpel: apprize her that while her pureſt intentions may be ſometimes calumniated, and her beſt actions miſrepreſented, ſhe will, on on the other hand, be liable to receive commendation on occaſions wherein her conſcience will tell her ſhe has not deſerved it; and that ſhe may be extolled by others for actions for which, if ſhe be honeſt, ſhe may condemn herſelf.

Do not however give her a gloomy and diſcouraging picture of the world, but rather ſeek to give her a juſt and ſober view of the part ſhe will have to act in it. And reſtrain the impetuoſity of hope, and cool the ardour of expectation, by explaining to her, that this part, even in her beſt eſtate, will probably conſiſt in a ſucceſſion of petty trials, and a round of quiet duties which, however well performed, though they will make little or no figure in the book of Fame, will prove of vaſt importance to her in that day when *another* "book is opened, and the "judgment is ſet, and every one will be judged "according to the deeds done in the body, "whether they be good or bad."

Say not that theſe juſt and ſober views will cruelly wither her young hopes, and deaden the innocent ſatisfactions of life. It is not true. There is, happily, an active ſpring in the mind of youth which bounds with freſh vigour and uninjured elaſticity from any ſuch temporary depreſſion. It is not meant that you ſhould darken her proſpect, ſo much as that you ſhould en-

lighten the eyes of her underſtanding to contemplate it. And though her feelings, taſtes, and paſſions, will all be againſt you, if you ſet before her a faithful delineation of life, yet it will be ſomething to get her judgment on your ſide. It is no unkind office to aſſiſt the ſhort view of youth with the aids of long-ſighted experience, to enable them to diſcover ſpots in the brightneſs of that life which dazzles them in proſpect, though it is probable they will after all chooſe to believe their own eyes rather than the offered glaſs.

CHAPTER VII.

On female ſtudy, and initiation into knowledge.—Error of cultivating the imagination to the neglect of the judgment.—Books of reaſoning recommended.

AS this little work by no means aſſumes the character of a general ſcheme of education, the author has purpoſely avoided expatiating largely on any kind of inſtruction, but as it happens to be connected, either immediately or remotely, with objects of a moral or religious nature. Of courſe ſhe has been ſo far from thinking it neceſſary to enter into the enumeration of thoſe popular books which are uſed in general inſtruction, that ſhe has purpoſely forborne to mention any.

With

With ſuch books the riſing generation is far more copiouſly and ably furniſhed than any that has preceded it; and out of an excellent variety the judicious inſtructor can hardly fail to make ſuch a ſelection as ſhall be beneficial to the pupil.

But while due praiſe ought not to be withheld from the improved methods of communicating the elements of general knowledge; yet is there not ſome danger that our very advantages may lead us into error, by cauſing us to repoſe ſo confidently on the multiplied helps which facilitate the entrance into learning, as to render our pupils ſuperficial through the very facility of acquirement? Where ſo much is done for them, may they not be led to do too little for themſelves? and beſides that exertion may ſlacken for want of a ſpur, may there not be a moral diſadvantage in poſſeſſing young perſons with the notion that learning may be acquired without diligence, and knowledge be attained without labour? Sound education never *can* be made a "primroſe path of dalliance." Do what we will, we cannot *cheat* children into learning, or *play* them into knowledge, according to the conciliating ſmoothneſs of the modern creed, and the ſelfiſh indolence of modern habits. There is no idle way to any acquiſitions which really deſerve the name. And as Euclid, in order to repreſs the impetuous vanity of greatneſs, told his Sovereign that there was no royal way to geometry,

metry, ſo the fond mother may be aſſured that there is no ſhort cut to any other kind of learning; no privileged bye-path cleared from the thorns and briars of repulſe and difficulty, for the accommodation of feminine weakneſs. The tree of knowledge, as a puniſhment, perhaps, for its having been at firſt unfairly taſted, cannot now be climbed without difficulty; and this very circumſtance ſerves afterwards to furniſh not only literary pleaſures, but moral advantages: for the knowledge which is acquired by unwearied aſſiduity is laſting in the poſſeſſion, and ſweet to the poſſeſſor; both perhaps in proportion to the coſt and labour of the acquiſition. And though an able teacher ought to endeavour, by improving the communicating faculty in himſelf, (for many know what they cannot teach,) to ſoften every difficulty; yet in ſpite of the kindneſs and ability with which he will ſmooth every obſtruction, it is probably among the wiſe inſtitutions of Providence that great difficulties ſhould ſtill remain. For education is but an initiation into that life of trial to which we are introduced on our entrance into this world. It is the firſt breaking-in to that ſtate of toil and labour to which we are born, and to which ſin has made us liable; and in this view of the ſubject the pains taken in the acquiſition of learning may be converted to higher uſes than ſuch as are purely literary.

Will

Will it not be abſcribed to a captious ſingularity, if I venture to remark that real knowledge and real piety, though they may have gained in many inſtances, have ſuffered in others from that profuſion of little, amuſing, ſentimental books with which the youthful library overflows? Abundance has its dangers as well as ſcarcity. In the firſt place may not the multiplicity of theſe alluring little works increaſe the natural reluctance to thoſe more dry and unintereſting ſtudies, of which, after all, the rudiments of every part of learning *muſt* conſiſt? And ſecondly, is there not ſome danger (though there are many honourable exceptions) that ſome of thoſe engaging narratives may ſerve to infuſe into the youthful heart a ſort of ſpurious goodneſs, a confidence of virtue, a parade of charity? And that the benevolent actions with the recital of which they abound, when they are not made to flow from any ſource but feeling, may tend to inſpire a ſelf-complacency, a ſelf-gratulation, a "ſtand by, "for I am holier than thou?" May not the ſucceſs with which the good deeds of the little heroes are uniformly crowned; the invariable reward which is made the inſtant concomitant of well-doing, furniſh the young with falſe views of the condition of life, and the nature of the divine dealings with men? May they not help to ſuggeſt a falſe ſtandard of morals, to infuſe a love of popularity and an anxiety for praiſe, in the place of that ſimple and unoſtentatious rule

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of doing whatever good we do, *becauſe it is the will of God?* The univerſal ſubſtitution of this principle would tend to purify the worldly morality of many a popular little ſtory. And there are few dangers which good parents will more carefully guard againſt, than that of giving their children a mere political piety; that ſort of religion which juſt goes to make people more reſpectable, and to ſtand well with the world; a religion which is to ſave appearances without inculcating realities; a religion which affects to "preach peace and good will to men," but which forgets to give "glory to God on high*."

There is a certain precocity of mind which is much helped on by theſe ſuperficial modes of inſtruction; for frivolous reading will produce its correſpondent effect, in much leſs time than books of ſolid inſtruction; the imagination being liable to be worked upon, and the feelings to be ſet a-going, much faſter than the underſtanding can be opened and the judgment enlightened. A talent for converſation ſhould be the reſult of education, not its precurſor; it is a golden fruit when

* An ingenious (and in many reſpects uſeful) French Treatiſe on Education, has too much encouraged this political piety; by conſidering religion as a thing of human convention, rather than of divine inſtitution; as a thing creditable, rather than commanded: by erecting the doctrine of expediency in the place of Chriſtian ſimplicity; and wearing away the ſpirit of truth, by the ſubſtitution of occaſional deceit, equivocation, ſubterfuge, and mental reſervation.

when ſuffered to ripen gradually on the tree of knowledge; but if forced in the hot-bed of a circulating library, it will turn out worthleſs and vapid in proportion as it was artificial and premature. Girls who have been accuſtomed to devour a multitude of frivolous books, will converſe and write with a far greater appearance of ſkill as to ſtyle and ſentiment at twelve or fourteen years old, than thoſe of a more advanced age who are under the diſcipline of ſeverer ſtudies; but the former having early attained to that low ſtandard which had been held out to them, become ſtationary; while the latter, quietly progreſſive, are paſſing through juſt gradations to a higher ſtrain of mind; and thoſe who early begin with talking and writing like women, commonly end with thinking and acting like children.

The irregular fancy of women is not ſufficiently ſubdued by early application, nor tamed by labour, and the kind of knowledge they commonly do acquire is eaſily attained; and being chiefly ſome ſlight acquiſition of the memory, ſomething which is given them to get off by themſelves, and not grounded in their minds by comment and converſation, it is eaſily loſt. The ſuperficial *queſtion*-and-*anſwer*-way, for inſtance, in which they often learn hiſtory, furniſhes the mind with little to lean on: the events being detached and ſeparated, the actions having no links to unite them with each other, the charac-

ters not being interweaved by mutual relation, the chronology being reduced to diſconnected dates, inſtead of preſenting an unbroken ſeries; of courſe, neither events, actions, characters, nor chronology, faſten themſelves on the underſtanding, but rather float in the memory as ſo many detached Epiſodes, than contribute to form the mind of the reader, or to enrich his judgment in the important ſcience of men and manners.

The ſwarms of *Abridgments*, *Beauties*, and *Compendiums*, which form too conſiderable a part of a young lady's library, may be conſidered in many inſtances as an infallible receipt for making a ſuperficial mind. The *names* of the renowned characters in hiſtory thus become familiar in the mouths of thoſe who can neither attach to the ideas of the perſon, the ſeries of his actions nor the peculiarities of his character. A few fine paſſages from the poets (paſſages perhaps which derived their chief beauty from their poſition and connection) are huddled together by ſome extract-maker, whoſe brief and diſconnected patches of broken and diſcordant materials, while they inflame young readers with the vanity of reciting, neither fill the mind nor form the taſte: and it is not difficult to trace back to their ſhallow ſources the hackney'd quotations of certain *accompliſhed* young ladies, who will be frequently found not to have come legitimately by any thing they know. I mean, not to

to have drawn it from its true ſpring, the original works of the author from which ſome *beauty-monger* has ſevered it. Human inconſiſtency in this, as in other caſes, wants to combine two irreconcileable things; it ſtrives to unite the reputation of knowledge with the pleaſures of idleneſs, forgetting that nothing that is valuable can be obtained without ſacrifices, and that if we would purchaſe knowledge, we muſt pay for it the fair and lawful price of time and induſtry. For this extract-reading, while it accommodates itſelf to the convenience, illuſtrates the character of the age in which we live. The appetite for pleaſure, and that love of eaſe and indolence which is generated by it, leave little time or taſte for ſound improvement; while the vanity, which is equally a characteriſtic of the exiſting period, puts in its claim alſo for indulgence, and contrives to figure away by theſe little ſnatches of ornamental reading, caught in the ſhort intervals of ſucceſſive amuſements.

Beſides, the taſte, thus pampered with delicious morſels, is early vitiated. The young reader of theſe *cluſtered beauties* conceives a diſreliſh for every thing which is plain, and grows impatient if obliged to get through thoſe equally neceſſary though leſs ſhowy parts of a work, in which perhaps the author gives the beſt proof of his judgment by keeping under that occaſional brilliancy and incidental ornament, of which

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theſe ſuperficial ſtudents are in conſtant purſuit. In all well-written books, there is much that is good which is not dazzling; and theſe ſhallow critics ſhould be taught, that it is for the embelliſhment of the more tame and unintereſting parts of his work, that the judicious poet commonly reſerves thoſe flowers, whoſe beauty is defaced when they are plucked from the garland into which he had ſo ſkilfully woven them.

The remark, however, as far as it relates to abridgments, is by no means of general application; there are many valuable works which from their bulk would be almoſt inacceſſible to a great number of readers, and a conſiderable part of which may not be generally uſeful. Even in the beſt written books there is often ſuperfluous matter; authors are apt to get enamoured of their ſubject, and to dwell too long on it: every perſon cannot find time to read a longer work on any ſubject, and yet it may be well for them to know ſomething on almoſt every ſubject; thoſe, therefore, who abridge voluminous works judiciouſly, render ſervice to the community. But there ſeems, if I may venture the remark, to be a miſtake in the *uſe* of abridgments. They are put ſyſtematically into the hands of *youth*, who have, or ought to have, leiſure for the works at large; while abridgments ſeem more immediately calculated for perſons in more advanced life, who wiſh to recall ſomething they had forgotten; who want to reſtore old ideas rather than acquire

acquire new ones; or they are uſeful for perſons immerſed in the buſineſs of the world, who have little leiſure for voluminous reading: they are excellent to refreſh the mind, but not competent to form it: they ſerve to bring back what had been formerly known, but do not ſupply a fund of knowledge.

Perhaps there is ſome analogy between the mental and bodily conformation of women. The inſtructor therefore ſhould imitate the phyſician. If the latter preſcribe bracing medicines for a body of which delicacy is the diſeaſe, the former would do well to prohibit relaxing reading for a mind which is already of too ſoft a texture, and ſhould ſtrengthen its feeble tone by invigorating reading.

By ſoftneſs, I cannot be ſuppoſed to mean imbecillity of underſtanding, but natural ſoftneſs of heart, and pliancy of temper, together with that indolence of ſpirit which is foſtered by indulging in ſeducing books, and in the general habits of faſhionable life.

I mean not here to recommend books which are immediately religious, but ſuch as exerciſe the reaſoning faculties, teach the mind to get acquainted with its own nature, and to ſtir up its own powers. Let not a timid young lady ſtart if I ſhould recommend to her, after a proper courſe of preparation, to ſwallow and digeſt ſuch ſtrong meat as Watts's or Duncan's little book of Logic, ſome parts of Mr. Locke's Eſſay

Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, and Biſhop Butler's Analogy. Where there is leiſure, and capacity, and an able friend to comment and to counſel, works of this nature might be profitably ſubſtituted in the place of ſo much Engliſh Sentiment, French Philoſophy, Italian Love-Songs, and fantaſtic German imagery and magic wonders. While ſuch enervating or abſurd books ſadly diſqualify the reader for ſolid purſuit or vigorous thinking, the ſtudies here recommended would act upon the conſtitution of the mind as a kind of alterative, and, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, would help to brace the intellectual ſtamina.

This ſuggeſtion is, however, by no means intended to exclude the works of taſte and imagination, which muſt always make the ornamental part, and of courſe a very conſiderable part, of female ſtudies. It is only intimated, that they ſhould not form them entirely and excluſively. For what is called dry tough reading, independent of the knowledge it conveys, is uſeful as an habit, and wholeſome as an exerciſe. Serious ſtudy ſerves to harden the mind for more trying conflicts; it lifts the reader from ſenſation to intellect; it abſtracts her from the world and its vanities; it fixes a wandering ſpirit, and fortifies a weak one; it divorces her from matter; it corrects that ſpirit of trifling which ſhe naturally contracts from the frivolous turn of female converſation, and the petty nature of female

male employments; it concentrates her attention, aſſiſts her in a habit of excluding trivial thoughts, and thus even helps to qualify her for religious purſuits. Yes, I repeat it, there is to woman a Chriſtian uſe to be made of ſober ſtudies; while books of an oppoſite caſt, however unexceptionable they may be ſometimes found in point of expreſſion, however free from evil in its more groſs and palpable ſhapes, yet from their very nature and conſtitution they excite a ſpirit of relaxation, by exhibiting ſcenes and ſuggeſting ideas which ſoften the mind and ſet the fancy at work; they take off wholeſome reſtraints, diminiſh ſober-mindedneſs, impair the general powers of reſiſtance, and at beſt feed habits of improper indulgence, and nouriſh a vain and viſionary indolence, which lays the mind open to error and the heart to ſeduction.

Women are little accuſtomed to cloſe reaſoning on any ſubject; ſtill leſs do they inure their minds to conſider particular parts of a ſubject; they are not habituated to turn a truth round, and view it in all its varied aſpects and poſitions; and this perhaps is one cauſe (as will be obſerved in another * place) of the too great confidence they are diſpoſed to place in their own opinions. Though their imagination is already too lively, and their judgment naturally incorrect; in educating them we go on to ſtimulate the imagination,

* Chapter on Converſation.

tion, while we neglect the regulation of the judgment. They already want ballaſt, and we make their education conſiſt in continually crowding more ſail than they can carry. Their intellectual powers being ſo little ſtrengthened by exerciſe, makes every little buſineſs appear a hardſhip to them: whereas ſerious ſtudy would be uſeful, were it only that it leads the mind to the habit of conquering difficulties. But it is peculiarly hard to turn at once from the indolent repoſe of light reading, from the concerns of mere animal life, the objects of ſenſe, or the frivolouſneſs of female chit chat; it is peculiarly hard, I ſay, to a mind ſo ſoftened, to reſcue itſelf from the dominion of ſelf-indulgence, to reſume its powers, to call home its ſcattered ſtrength, to ſhut out every foreign intruſion, to force back a ſpring ſo unnaturally bent, and to devote itſelf to religious reading, to active buſineſs, to ſober reflection, to ſelf-examination: whereas to an intellect accuſtomed to think at all, the difficulty of thinking ſeriouſly is obviouſly leſſened.

Far be it from me to deſire to make ſcholaſtic ladies or female dialecticians; but there is little fear that the kind of books here recommended, if thoroughly ſtudied, and not ſuperficially ſkimmed, will make them pedants or induce conceit; for by ſhewing them the poſſible powers of the human mind, you will bring them to ſee the littleneſs of their own; and ſurely to get acquainted with the mind, to regulate and to inform it,

and

and to ſhew it its own ignorance and its own nature, does not ſeem the way to puff it up. But let her who is diſpoſed to be elated with her literary acquiſitions, check the riſing vanity by calling to mind the juſt remark of Swift, "that "after all her boaſted acquirements, a woman "will, generally ſpeaking, be found to poſſeſs "leſs of what is called learning than a common "ſchool-boy."

Neither is there any fear that this ſort of reading will convert ladies into authors. The direct contrary effect will be likely to be produced by the peruſal of writers who throw the generality of readers at ſuch an unapproachable diſtance as to check preſumption, inſtead of exciting it. Who are thoſe ever multiplying authors, that with unparallelled fecundity are overſtocking the world with their quick-ſucceeding progeny? They are *Novel-Writers*; the eaſineſs of whoſe productions is at once the cauſe of their own fruitfulneſs, and of the almoſt infinitely numerous race of imitators to whom they give birth. Such is the frightful facility of this ſpecies of compoſition, that every raw girl, while ſhe reads, is tempted to fancy that ſhe can alſo write. And as Alexander, on peruſing the Iliad, found by congenial ſympathy the image of Achilles ſtamped on his own ardent ſoul, and felt himſelf the hero he was ſtudying; and as Corregio, on firſt beholding a picture which exhibited the perfection.

fection of the graphic art, prophetically felt all his own future greatneſs, and cried out in rapture, "And I too am a painter!" ſo a thorough-paced novel-reading Miſs, at the cloſe of every tiſſue of hackney'd adventures, feels within herſelf the ſtirring impulſe of correſponding genius, and triumphantly exclaims, "And I too am an "author!" The glutted imagination ſoon overflows with the redundance of cheap ſentiment and plentiful incident, and by a ſort of arithmetical proportion, is enabled by the peruſal of any three novels, to produce a fourth; till every freſh production, like the prolific progeny of Banquo, is followed by

Another, and another, and another!

Is a lady however deſtitute of talents, education or knowledge of the world, whoſe ſtudies have been completed by a circulating library, in any diſtreſs of mind? the writing a novel ſuggeſts itſelf as the beſt ſoother of her ſorrows! Does ſhe labour under any depreſſion of circumſtances? writing a novel occurs as the readieſt receipt for mending them! And ſhe ſolaces her imagination with the conviction that the ſubſcription which has been extorted by her importunity, or given to her neceſſities, has been offered as an homage to her genius. And this confidence inſtantly levies a freſh contribution for a ſucceeding work. Capacity and cultivation are ſo little taken into the account, that writing a book

book ſeems to be now conſidered as the only ſure reſource which the idle and the illiterate have always in their power.

May the Author be indulged in a ſhort digreſſion while ſhe remarks, though rather out of its place, that the corruption occaſioned by theſe books has ſpread ſo wide, and deſcended ſo low, as to have become one of the moſt univerſal as well as moſt pernicious ſources of corruption among us. Not only among milleners, mantua-makers, and other traders where numbers work together, the labour of one girl is frequently ſacrificed that ſhe may be ſpared to read thoſe miſchievous books to the others; but ſhe has been aſſured by clergymen who have witneſſed the fact, that they are procured and greedily read in the wards of our Hoſpitals! an awful hint, that thoſe who teach the poor to read, ſhould not only take care to furniſh them with principles which will lead them to abhor corrupt books, but that they ſhould alſo furniſh them with ſuch books as ſhall ſtrengthen and confirm their principles*. And let

* The above facts furniſh no argument on the ſide of thoſe who would keep the poor in ignorance. Thoſe who cannot *read* can *hear*, and are likely to hear to worſe purpoſe than thoſe who have been better taught. And that ignorance furniſhes no ſecurity for integrity either in morals or politics, the late revolts in more than one country, remarkable for the ignorance of the poor, fully illuſtrate. It is earneſtly hoped that the above facts may tend to impreſs ladies with the importance of ſuperintending

let every Chriſtian remember, that there is no other way of entering truly into the ſpirit of that divine prayer, which petitions that the name of God may be "hallowed," that "his kingdom (of grace) "may come," and that "his will "may be done on earth as it is in heaven," than by each individual contributing according to his meaſure to accompliſh the work for which he prays; for to pray that theſe great objects may be promoted, without contributing to their promotion by our exertions, our money, and our influence, is a palpable inconſiſtency.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the religious and moral uſe of hiſtory and geography.

BUT while every ſort of uſeful knowledge ſhould be carefully imparted to young perſons, it ſhould be imparted not merely for its own ſake, but alſo for the ſake of its ſubſerviency to higher things. All human learning ſhould be taught, not

tending the inſtruction of the poor, and of making it an indiſpenſable part of their charity to give them moral and religious books.

not as an end, but a means; and in this view even a leſſon of hiſtory or geography may be converted into a leſſon of religion. In the ſtudy of hiſtory, the inſtructor will accuſtom the pupil not merely to ſtore her memory with facts and anecdotes, and to aſcertain dates and epochas; but ſhe will accuſtom her alſo to trace effects to their cauſes, to examine the ſecret ſprings of action, and accurately to obſerve the operation of the paſſions. It is only meant to notice here ſome few of the moral benefits which may be derived from a judicious peruſal of hiſtory; and from among other points of inſtruction, I ſelect the following.*:

The ſtudy of hiſtory may ſerve to give a clearer inſight into the corruption of human nature:

It

* It were to be wiſhed that more hiſtorians reſembled the excellent Rollin in the religious and moral turn given to his writings of this kind.—But here may I be permitted to obſerve incidentally, (for it is not immediately analogous to my ſubject,) that there is one diſadvantage which attends the common practice of ſetting young ladies to read ancient hiſtory and geography in French or Italian, who have not been previouſly well grounded in the pronunciation of claſſical names of perſons and places in our own language. The foreign terminations of Greek and Roman names are often very different from the Engliſh, and where they are firſt acquired are frequently retained and adopted in their ſtead, ſo as to give an illiterate appearance to the converſation of ſome women who are not really ignorant. And this defective pronunciation is the more to be guarded againſt in the education of ladies who are not taught quantity as boys are.

It may help to ſhew the *plan* of Providence in the direction of events, and in the uſe of unworthy inſtruments:

It may aſſiſt in the *vindication* of Providence, in the common failure of virtue and the frequent ſucceſs of vice:

It may lead to a diſtruſt of our own judgment:

It may contribute to our improvement in ſelf-knowledge.

But to prove to the pupil the important doctrine of human corruption from the ſtudy of hiſtory, will require a truly Chriſtian commentator in the friend with whom the work is peruſed; for, from the low ſtandard of right eſtabliſhed by the generality of hiſtorians who erect ſo many perſons into good characters who fall ſhort of the true idea of Chriſtian virtue, the unaſſiſted reader will be liable to form very imperfect views of what is real goodneſs; and will conclude, as his author ſometimes does, that the true idea of human nature is to be taken from the medium between his beſt and his worſt characters; without acquiring a juſt notion of that prevalence of evil, which, in ſpite of thoſe few brighter luminaries that here and there juſt ſerve to gild the gloom of hiſtory, tends abundantly to eſtabliſh the doctrine. It will indeed be continually eſtabliſhing itſelf by thoſe who, in peruſing the hiſtory of mankind, carefully mark the riſe and progreſs of ſin, from the firſt timid irruption of

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an evil thought, to the fearleſs accompliſhment of the abhorred crime in which that thought has ended: from the indignant queſtion, "Is thy "ſervant a dog that he ſhould do this great "thing* ?" to the perpetration of that very enormity of which the ſelf-acquitting delinquent could not endure the ſlighteſt ſuggeſtion.

In this connection may it not be obſerved, that young perſons ſhould be put on their guard againſt a too implicit belief in the flattering accounts which many voyage-writers are fond of exhibiting of the virtue, amiableneſs, and benignity of ſome of the countries newly diſcovered by our circumnavigators; that they ſhould learn to ſuſpect the ſuperior goodneſs aſcribed to the Hindoos, and particularly the account of the inhabitants of the Pellew Iſlands? Theſe laſt indeed have been almoſt repreſented as having eſcaped the univerſal taint of our common nature, and would ſeem by their purity to have ſprung from another anceſtor than Adam.

One cannot forbear ſuſpecting that theſe pleaſing but ſomewhat overcharged portraits of man, in his natural ſtate, are drawn with the invidious deſign, by counteracting the doctrine of human corruption, to degrade the value and even deſtroy the neceſſity of the Chriſtian religion; by inſinuating that uncultivated man is ſo diſpoſed to rectitude as to ſuperſede the occaſion for that redemption

* 2 Kings, viii. 13.

redemption which is profeſſedly deſigned for ſinners. That in countries profeſſing Chriſtianity, very many are not Chriſtians will be too readily granted. Yet to ſay nothing of the vaſt ſuperiority of goodneſs in the lives of thoſe who are really governed by Chriſtianity, is there not ſomething even in her reflex light which guides to greater purity many of thoſe who do not profeſs to walk by it; I doubt much, if numbers of the unbelievers of a Chriſtian country, from the ſounder views and better habits derived incidentally and collaterally, as it were, from the influence of a Goſpel, the truth of which however they do not acknowledge, would not ſtart at many of the actions which theſe *heathen perfectioniſts* daily commit without heſitation.

The religious reader of general hiſtory will obſerve the controlling hand of Providence in the direction of events, and in turning the moſt unworthy actions and inſtruments to the accompliſhment of his own purpoſes. She will mark infinite Wiſdom directing what appears to be caſual occurrences, to the completion of his own plan. She will point out how cauſes ſeemingly the moſt unconnected, events ſeemingly the moſt unpromiſing, circumſtances ſeemingly the moſt incongruous, are all working together for ſome final good. She will mark how national as well as individual crimes are often over-ruled to ſome hidden purpoſe far different from the intention

of

of the actors: how Omnipotence can and often does bring about the beſt purpoſes by the worſt inſtruments: how the bloody and unjuſt conqueror is but "the rod of his wrath," to puniſh or to purify his offending children: how "the fury of the oppreſſor," and the ſufferings of the oppreſſed, will one day when the whole ſcheme ſhall be unfolded, vindicate His righteous dealings. She will explain to the leſs enlightened reader, how infinite Wiſdom often mocks the inſignificance of human greatneſs, and the ſhallowneſs of human ability, by ſetting aſide inſtruments the moſt powerful and promiſing, while He works by agents comparatively contemptible. But ſhe will carefully guard this doctrine of Divine Providence, thus working out his own purpoſes through the ſins of his creatures, and by the inſtrumentality of the wicked, by calling to mind, while the offender is but a tool in the hands of the great Artificer, "the woe "denounced againſt him by whom the offence "cometh!" She will explain how thoſe mutations and revolutions in ſtates which appear to us ſo unaccountable, and how thoſe operations of Providence which ſeem to us ſo entangled and complicated, all move harmoniouſly and in perfect order: that there is not an event but has its commiſſion; not a misfortune which breaks its allotted rank; not a trial which moves out of its appointed track. While calamities and crimes

ſeem to fly in caſual confuſion, all is commanded or permitted; all is under the control of a wiſdom which cannot err, of a goodneſs which cannot do wrong.

To explain my meaning by a few inſtances. When the ſpirit of the youthful reader riſes in honeſt indignation at that hypocritical piety which divorced an unoffending Queen to make way for the lawful crime of our eighth Henry's marriage with Ann Boleyn; and when that indignation is increaſed by the more open profligacy which brought about the execution of the latter; the inſtructor will not loſe ſo fair an occaſion for unfolding how in the councils of the Moſt High the crimes of the King were overruled to the happineſs of the country: and how, to this inauſpicious marriage, from which the heroic Elizabeth ſprang, the Proteſtant religion owed its firm ſtability. This view of the ſubject will lead the reader to juſtify the providence of God without diminiſhing her abhorrence of the vices of the tyrant.

She will explain to her, how even the conqueſts of ambition, after having deluged a land with blood, and involved the perpetrator in guilt, and the innocent victim in ruin, may yet be made the inſtruments of opening to future generations the way to commerce, to civilization, to Chriſtianity. She may remind her, as they are following Cæſar in his invaſion of Britain, that whereas the conqueror fancied he was only gratifying

his

his own inordinate ambition, extending the flight of the Roman Eagle, immortalizing his own name, and proving "that this world was "made for Cæsar;" he was in reality becoming the effectual though unconscious instrument of leading a land of barbarians to civilization and to science: and was in fact preparing an island of Pagans to embrace the religion of Christ. She will inform her, that when the victorious country of Cæsar had made Judea a Roman province, and the Jews had become its tributaries, the Romans did not know, nor did the indignant Jews suspect, that this circumstance was operating to the confirmation of an event the most important the world ever witnessed.

For when "Augustus sent forth a decree that "all the world should be taxed;" he vainly thought he was only enlarging his own imperial power, whereas he was acting in unconscious subservience to the decree of a higher Sovereign, and was helping to ascertain by a public act the exact period of Christ's birth, and furnishing a record of his extraction from that family from which it was predicted by a long line of Prophets that he should spring. Herod's atrocious murder of the innocents has added an additional circumstance for the confirmation of *our* faith; the incredulity of Thomas has strengthened our belief; nay, the treachery of Judas, and the injustice of Pilate, were the human instruments employed for the salvation of the world.

The youth that is not thoroughly armed with Chriſtian principles, will be tempted to mutiny not only againſt the juſtice, but the very exiſtence of a ſuperintending Providence, in contemplating thoſe frequent inſtances which occur in hiſtory of the ill ſucceſs of the more virtuous cauſe, and the proſperity of the wicked. He will ſee with aſtoniſhment that it is Rome which triumphs, while Carthage, which had clearly the better cauſe, falls. Now and then indeed a Cicero prevails, and a Cataline is ſubdued: but often, it is Cæſar ſucceſsful againſt the ſomewhat juſter pretenſions of Pompey, and againſt the ſtill clearer cauſe of Cato. It is Octavius who triumphs, and it is over Brutus that he triumphs! It is Tiberius that is enthroned, while Germanicus falls!

Thus his faith in a righteous Providence at firſt view is ſtaggered, and he is ready to ſay, "Surely it is not God that governs the earth!" But on a fuller conſideration, (and here the ſuggeſtions of a Chriſtian inſtructor are peculiarly wanted,) there will appear great wiſdom in this very confuſion of vice and virtue; for it is calculated to ſend one's thoughts forward to a world of retribution, the principle of retribution being ſo imperfectly eſtabliſhed in this. It is indeed ſo far common for virtue to have the advantage here, in point of happineſs at leaſt, though not of glory, that the courſe of Providence is ſtill calculated to prove that God is on the ſide of

virtue;

virtue; but ſtill, virtue is ſo often unſucceſsful, that clearly the God of virtue, in order that his work may be perfect, muſt have in reſerve a world of retribution. This confuſed ſtate of things therefore is juſt that ſtate which is moſt of all calculated to confirm the deeply conſiderate mind in the belief of a future ſtate: for if all were even here, or very nearly ſo, ſhould we not ſay ſo, "Juſtice is already ſatisfied, and "there *needs* no other world?" On the other hand, if vice always triumphed, ſhould we not then be ready to argue in favour of vice rather than virtue, and to *wiſh* for no other world?

It ſeems ſo very important to ground young perſons in the belief that they will not inevitably meet in this world with reward and ſucceſs according to their merit, and to habituate them to expect even the moſt virtuous attempts to be often, though not always diſappointed, that I am in danger of tautology on this point. This fact is preciſely what hiſtory teaches. The truth ſhould be plainly told to the young reader; and the antidote to that evil, which miſtaken and worldly people would expect to ariſe from divulging this diſcouraging doctrine, is *faith*. The importance of faith therefore, and the neceſſity of it to real, unbending, and perſevering virtue, is ſurely made plain by profane hiſtory itſelf. For the ſame thing which happens to ſtates and kings, happens to private life and to individuals. Thus there is ſcarcely a page, even of Pagan Hiſtory, which may not be made inſtrumental

mental to the eſtabliſhing of the truth of revelation: and it is only by ſuch a guarded mode of inſtruction that ſome of the evils of the ſtudy of ancient literature can be obviated.

Diſtruſt and diffidence in our own judgment ſeems to be alſo an important inſtruction to be learned from hiſtory. How contrary to all expectation do the events therein recorded commonly turn out? How continually is the moſt ſagacious conjecture of human penetration baffled? and yet we proceed to foretel this conſequence, and to predict that event from the appearances of things under our own obſervation, with the ſame arrogant certainty as if we had never been warned by the monitory annals of ſucceſſive ages.

There is ſcarcely one great event in hiſtory which does not [illegible] produce effects upon which human foreſight could never have calculated. The ſucceſs of Auguſtus againſt his country produced peace in many diſtant provinces, who thus ceaſed to be haraſſed and tormented by this oppreſſive republic. Could this effect have been foreſeen, it might have ſobered the deſpair of Cato, and checked the vehemence of Brutus. In politics, in ſhort in every thing except in morals and religion, all is, to a conſiderable degree, uncertain. This reaſoning is not meant to ſhow that Cato ought not to have *fought*, but that he ought not to have *deſponded* even after the laſt battle; and certainly, even upon his own principles, ought not to have killed himſelf. It would

would be departing too much from my object to apply this argument, however obvious the application, againſt thoſe who were driven to unreaſonable diſtruſt and deſpair by the late ſucceſſes of a neighbouring nation.

But all knowledge will be comparatively of little value, if we neglect ſelf-knowledge; and of ſelf-knowledge hiſtory and biography may be made ſucceſsful vehicles. It will be to little purpoſe that our pupils become accurate critics on the characters of others, while they remain ignorant of themſelves; for while to thoſe who exerciſe a habit of ſelf-application a book of profane hiſtory may be made an inſtrument of improvement in this difficult ſcience; ſo without ſuch an habit the Bible itſelf may, in this view, be read with little profit.

It will be to no purpoſe that the reader weeps over the fortitude of the Chriſtian hero, or the conſtancy of the martyr, if ſhe do not bear in mind that ſhe herſelf is called to endure her own common trials with ſomething of the ſame temper: if ſhe do not bear in mind that, to control irregular humours, and to ſubmit to the daily vexations of life, will require, though in a lower degree, the exertion of the ſame principle, and ſupplication for the aid of the ſame ſpirit which ſuſtained the Chriſtian hero in the trying conflicts of life, or the martyr in his agony at the ſtake.

May I be permitted to ſuggeſt a few inſtances, by way of ſpecimen, how both ſacred and common hiſtory may tend to promote ſelf-knowledge? And let me again remind the warm admirer of ſuffering piety under *extraordinary trials*, that if ſhe now fail in the petty occaſions to which ſhe is actually called out, ſhe would not be likely to have ſtood in thoſe more trying occaſions which excite her admiration.

While ſhe is applauding the ſelf-denying ſaint who renounced his eaſe, or choſe to embrace death, rather than violate his duty, let her aſk herſelf if ſhe has never refuſed to ſubmit to the paltry inconvenience of giving up her company, or even altering her dinner-hour on a Sunday, though by this trifling ſacrifice her family might have been enabled to attend the public worſhip in the afternoon.

While ſhe reads with horror that Belſhazzar was rioting with his thouſand nobles at the very moment when the Perſian army was burſting through the brazen gates of Babylon; is ſhe very ſure that ſhe herſelf, in an almoſt equally imminent moment of public danger, has not been nightly indulging in every ſpecies of diſſipation?

When ſhe is deploring the inconſiſtency of the human heart, while ſhe contraſts in Mark Antony his bravery and contempt of eaſe at one period, with his licentious indulgences at another; or while ſhe laments over the intrepid foul

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of Cæsar, whom she had been following in his painful marches, or admiring in his contempt of death, dissolved in dissolute pleasures with the ensnaring Queen of Egypt; let her examine whether she herself has never, though in a much lower degree, evinced something of the same inconsistency? whether she who lives perhaps an orderly, sober, and reasonable life during her summer residence in the country, does not plunge with little scruple in the winter into all the most extravagant pleasures of the capital? whether she never carries about with her an accommodating kind of religion, which can be made to bend to places and seasons, to climates and customs; which takes its tincture from the fashion without, and not its habits from the principle within; which is decent with the pious, sober with the orderly, and loose with the licentious?

While she is admiring the generosity of Alexander in giving away kingdoms and provinces, let her, in order to ascertain whether she could imitate this magnanimity, take heed if she herself is daily seizing all the little occasions of doing good, which every day presents to the affluent? *Her* call is not to sacrifice a province; but does she sacrifice an opera ticket? She who is not doing all the good she can under her present circumstances, would not do all she foresees she could, in imaginary ones, were her power enlarged to the extent of her wishes.

While ſhe is inveighing with patriotic indignation, that in a neighbouring metropolis thirty theatres were open every night in time of war and public calamity, is ſhe very clear that in a metropolis which contains only three, ſhe was not almoſt conſtantly at one of them in time of war and public calamity alſo? For though in a national view it may make a wide difference whether there be in the capital three theatres or thirty, yet, as the ſame perſon can only go to one of them at once, it makes but little difference as to the quantum of diſſipation in the individual. She who rejoices at ſucceſsful virtue in a hiſtory, or at the proſperity of a perſon whoſe intereſts do not interfere with her own, may exerciſe her ſelf-knowledge, by examining whether ſhe rejoices equally at the happineſs of every one about her; and let her remember ſhe does not rejoice at it in the true ſenſe, if ſhe does not labour to promote it. She who glows with rapture at a virtuous character in hiſtory, ſhould aſk her own heart, whether ſhe is equally ready to do juſtice to the fine qualities of her acquaintance, though ſhe may not particularly love them; and whether ſhe takes unfeigned pleaſure in the ſuperior talents, virtues, fame, and fortune of thoſe whom ſhe profeſſes to love, though ſhe is eclipſed by them?

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In like manner, in the ſtudy of geography and natural hiſtory, the attention ſhould be habitually turned to the goodneſs of Providence, who commonly adapts the various productions of climates to the peculiar wants of the reſpective inhabitants. To illuſtrate my meaning by one or two inſtances out of a thouſand. The reader may be led to admire the conſiderate goodneſs of Providence in having cauſed the ſpiry fir, whoſe ſlender foliage does not obſtruct the beams of the ſun, to grow in the dreary regions of the North, whoſe ſhivering inhabitants could ſpare none of its ſcanty rays; while in the torrid zone, the palm-tree, the plantane, and the banana, ſpread their umbrella leaves to break the almoſt intolerable fervors of a vertical ſun. How the camel, who is the ſole carrier of all the merchandiſe of Turkey, Perſia, Egypt, Arabia, and Barbary, who is obliged to tranſport his incredible burthens through countries in which paſture is ſo rare, can ſubſiſt twenty-four hours without food, and can travel, loaded, many days without water, through dry and duſty deſerts, which ſupply none; and all this, not from the habit but from the conformation of the animal: for Naturaliſts make this conformity of powers to climates a rule of judgment in aſcertaining the native countries of animals, and always determine it to be that to which their powers and properties are moſt appropriate.

Thus

Thus the writers of natural hiſtory are perhaps unintentionally magnifying the operations of Providence, when they inſiſt that animals do not modify and give way to the influence of other climates; but here they too commonly ſtop; neglecting, or perhaps refuſing, to aſcribe to infinite goodneſs this wiſe and merciful accommodation; and here the pious inſtructor will come in, in aid of their deficiency: for Philoſophers too ſeldom trace up cauſes, and wonders, and bleſſings to their Author. And it is peculiarly to be regretted that a late juſtly celebrated French Naturaliſt, who though not famous for his accuracy, poſſeſſed ſuch diverſified powers of deſcription that he had the talent of making the drieſt ſubjects intereſting; together with ſuch a livelineſs of delineation, that his characters of animals are drawn with a ſpirit and variety rather to be looked for in an hiſtorian of men than of beaſts: it is to be regretted, I ſay, that this writer, with all his excellencies, is abſolutely inadmiſſible into the library of a young lady, both on account of his immodeſty and his impiety; and if in wiſhing to exclude him, it may be thought wrong to have given him ſo much commendation, it is only meant to ſhew that the author is not led to reprobate his principles from inſenſibility to his talents. The remark is rather made to put the reader on remembering that no brilliancy of genius, no diverſity of attainments,

ſhould

ſhould ever be allowed as a commutation for defective principles and corrupt ideas*.

* Goldſmith's Hiſtory of animated Nature has many references to a Divine Author. It is to be wiſhed that ſome judicious perſon would publiſh a new edition of this work, purified from the indelicate and offenſive parts.

CHAPTER IX.

On the uſe of definitions, and the moral benefits of accuracy in language.

"PERSONS having been accuſtomed from "their cradles to learn words before they knew "the ideas for which they ſtand, uſually continue "to do ſo all their lives, never taking the pains "to ſettle in their minds the determined ideas "which belong to them. This want of a pre-"ciſe ſignification in their words, when they "come to reaſon, *eſpecially in moral matters*, is the "cauſe of very obſcure and uncertain notions. "They uſe theſe undetermined words confi-"dently, without much troubling their heads "about a certain fixed meaning, whereby, be-"ſides the eaſe of it, they obtain this advantage, "that as in ſuch diſcourſe they are ſeldom in "the right, ſo they are as ſeldom to be convinced

"that

" that they are in the wrong, it being juſt the
" ſame to go about to draw thoſe perſons out of
" their miſtakes, who have no ſettled notions,
" as to diſpoſſeſs a vagrant of his habitation who
" has no ſettled abode.—The chief end of lan-
" guage being to be underſtood, words ſerve not
" for that end when they do not excite in the
" hearer the ſame idea which they ſtand for in
" the mind of the ſpeaker*."

I have choſen to ſhelter myſelf under the broad ſanction of the great Author here quoted, with a view to apply this rule in philology to a moral purpoſe; for it applies to the veracity of converſation as much as to its correctneſs; and as ſtrongly recommends unequivocal and ſimple truth, as accurate and juſt expreſſion. Scarcely any one perhaps has an adequate conception how much clear and correct expreſſion favours the elucidation of truth; and the ſide of truth is obviouſly the ſide of morals; it is in fact one and the ſame cauſe; and it is of courſe the ſame cauſe with that of true religion alſo.

It is therefore no worthleſs part of education, even in a religious view, to ſtudy the preciſe meaning of words, and the appropriate ſignification of language. To this end I know no better method than to accuſtom young perſons very early to a habit of defining common words and things; for, as definition ſeems to lie at the root:

* Locke.

root of correctneſs, to be accuſtomed to define Engliſh words in Engliſh, would improve the underſtanding more than barely to know what thoſe words are called in French or Italian. Or rather, one uſe of learning other languages is, becauſe definition is often involved in etymology; that is, ſince many Engliſh words take their derivation from foreign languages, they cannot be ſo accurately underſtood without ſome knowledge of thoſe languages: but preciſion of any kind, either moral or philological, too ſeldom finds its way into the education of women.

It is perhaps going out of my province to obſerve, that it might be well if young *men* alſo, before they entered on the world, were to be furniſhed with correct definitions of certain words, the uſe of which is become rather ambiguous; or rather they ſhould be inſtructed in the *double ſenſe* of modern phraſeology. For inſtance; they ſhould be provided with a good definition of the word *honour* in the faſhionable ſenſe, ſhewing what vices it includes, and what virtues it does not include: the term *good company*, which even the courtly Petronius of our days has defined as ſometimes including not a few immoral and diſreputable characters; *religion*, which in the various ſenſes aſſigned it by the world, ſometimes means ſuperſtition, ſometimes fanaticiſm, and ſometimes a mere diſpoſition to attend on any kind of form of worſhip: the word *goodneſs*, which is made to mean every thing that

is not notoriouſly bad; and ſometimes even that too, if what is notoriouſly bad be accompanied by good humour, pleaſing manners, and a little alms-giving. By theſe means they would go forth armed againſt many of the falſe opinions which through the abuſe or ambiguous meaning of words paſs ſo current in the world.

But to return to the youthful part of that ſex which is the more immediate object of this little work. With correct definition they ſhould alſo be taught to ſtudy the ſhades of words, and this not merely with a view to accuracy of expreſſion, though even that involves both ſenſe and elegance, but to moral truth.

It may be thought ridiculous to aſſert, that morals have any connection with the purity of language, or that the preciſion of truth may be violated through defect of critical exactneſs in the three degrees of compariſon: yet how frequently do we hear from the dealers in ſuperlatives, of "moſt admirable, ſuper-excellent, "and quite perfect" people, who, to plain perſons, not bred in the ſchool of exaggeration, would appear mere common characters, not riſing above the level of mediocrity! By this negligence in the juſt application of words, we ſhall be as much miſled by theſe trope and figure ladies, when they degrade as when they panegyrize; for to a plain and ſober judgment, a tradeſman may not be "the moſt good-for-nothing "fellow that ever exiſted," merely becauſe it

was

was impoſſible for him to execute in an hour an order which required a week; a lady may not be "the moſt hideous fright the world "ever ſaw," though the make of her gown may have been obſolete for a month; nor may one's young friend's father be "a monſter of "cruelty," though he may be a quiet gentleman who does not chooſe to live at watering-places, but likes to have his daughter ſtay at home with him in the country.

But of all the parts of ſpeech the interjection is the moſt abundantly in uſe with the hyperbolical fair ones. Would it could be added that theſe emphatical expletives (if I may make uſe of a contradictory term) were not ſometimes tinctured with profaneneſs! Though I am perſuaded that idle habit is more at the bottom of this deep offence than intended impiety, yet there is ſcarcely any error of youthful talk which merits ſeverer caſtigation. And an habit of exclamation ſhould be rejected by poliſhed people as vulgar, even if it were not abhorred as profane.

The habit of exaggerating trifles, together with the grand female failing of exceſſive mutual flattery, and elaborate general profeſſions of fondneſs and attachment, is inconceivably cheriſhed by the voluminous private correſpondences in which ſome girls are indulged. In vindication of this practice it is pleaded that a facility of ſtyle, and an eaſy turn of expreſſion, are acquiſitions to be derived from an early interchange

change of ſentiments by letter-writing; but even if it were ſo, theſe would be dearly purchaſed by the ſacrifice of that truth, ſobriety, and correctneſs of language, and that ingenuous ſimplicity of character and manners ſo lovely in female youth.

But antecedent to this *epiſtolary period* of life, they ſhould have been accuſtomed to the moſt ſcrupulous exactneſs in whatever they relate. They ſhould maintain the moſt critical accuracy in *facts*, in *dates*, in *numbering*, in *deſcribing*, in ſhort, in whatever pertains, either directly or indirectly, cloſely or remotely, to the great fundamental principle, *Truth*. It is ſo very difficult for perſons of great livelineſs to reſtrain themſelves within the ſober limits of ſtrict veracity, either in their aſſertions or narrations, eſpecially when a little undue indulgence of fancy is apt to procure for them the praiſe of genius and ſpirit, that this reſtraint is one of the earlieſt principles which ſhould be worked into the youthful mind.

The converſation of young females is alſo in danger of being overloaded with epithets. As in the warm ſeaſon of youth hardly any thing is ſeen in the true point of viſion, ſo hardly any thing is named in naked ſimplicity; and the very ſenſibility of the feelings is partly a cauſe of the extravagance of the expreſſion. But here, as in other points, the ſacred writers, particularly of the New Teſtament, preſent us with the pureſt models;

models; and its natural and unlaboured ſtyle of expreſſion is perhaps not the meaneſt evidence of the truth of the Goſpel. There is throughout the whole narratives, no overcharged character, no elaborate deſcription, nothing ſtudiouſly emphatical, as if truth of itſelf were weak, and wanted to be helped out. There is little panegyric, and leſs invective; none but on great, and awful, and juſtifiable occaſions. The authors record their own faults with the ſame honeſty as if they were the faults of other men, and the faults of other men with as little amplification as if they were their own. There is perhaps no book in which adjectives are ſo ſparingly uſed. A modeſt ſtatement of the fact, with no colouring and little comment, with little emphaſis and no varniſh, is the example held out to us for correcting the exuberances of paſſion and of language, by that divine volume which furniſhes us with the ſtill more important rule of faith and ſtandard of practice. Nor is the truth lowered by any feebleneſs, nor is the ſpirit diluted, nor the impreſſion weakened by this ſoberneſs and moderation; for with all this plainneſs there is ſo much force, with all this ſimplicity there is ſo much energy, that a few ſlight touches and artleſs ſtrokes of Scripture characters convey a ſtronger outline of the perſon delineated, than is ſometimes given by the moſt elaborate and finiſhed portrait of more artificial hiſtorians.

If it be objected to this remark, that many parts of the ſacred writings abound in a lofty, figurative, and even hyperbolical ſtyle; this objection applies chiefly to the writings of the Old Teſtament, and to the prophetical and poetical parts of that. But the metaphorical and florid ſtyle of thoſe writings is diſtinct from the inaccurate and over-ſtrained expreſſion we have been cenſuring; for that only is inaccuracy which leads to a falſe and inadequate conception in the reader or hearer. The lofty ſtyle of the Eaſtern, and of other heroic poetry, does not ſo miſlead; for the metaphor is underſtood to be a metaphor, and the imagery is underſtood to be ornamental. The ſtyle of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament is not, it is true, plain in oppoſition to figurative, nor ſimple in oppoſition to florid; but it is plain and ſimple in the beſt ſenſe, as oppoſed to falſe principles and falſe taſte; it raiſes no wrong idea; it gives an exact impreſſion of the thing it means to convey; and its very tropes and figures, though bold, are never unnatural or affected: when it embelliſhes it does not miſlead; even when it exaggerates, it does not miſrepreſent; if it be hyperbolical, it is ſo either in compliance with the genius of Oriental language, or in compliance with contemporary cuſtoms, or becauſe the ſubject is one which will be moſt forcibly impreſſed by a ſtrong figure. The loftineſs of the expreſſion deducts nothing from the weight of the circumſtance; the imagery animates the reader without miſlead-

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ing him; the boldeſt illuſtration, while it dilates his conception of the ſubject, detracts nothing from its exactneſs; and divine truth, inſtead of being injured by the opulence of the figures, contrives to make them freſh and varied avenues to the heart and the underſtanding.

CHAPTER X.

On Religion.—The neceſſity and duty of early inſtruction ſhewn by analogy with human learning.

IT has been the faſhion of our late innovators in philoſophy, who have written ſome of the moſt brilliant and popular treatiſes on education, to decry the practice of early inſtilling religious knowledge into the minds of children. In vindication of this opinion it has been alledged, that it is of the utmoſt importance to the cauſe of truth, that the mind of man ſhould be kept free from prepoſſeſſions; and in particular, that every one ſhould be left to form ſuch judgment on religious ſubjects as may ſeem beſt to his own reaſon in maturer years.

This ſentiment has received ſome countenance from thoſe better characters who have wiſhed, on the faireſt principle, to encourage free inquiry

in religion; but it has been pushed to the blameable excess here censured, chiefly by the new philosophers; who, while they profess only an ingenuous zeal for truth, are in fact slily endeavouring to destroy Christianity itself, by discountenancing, under the plausible pretence of free inquiry, all attention whatever to the religious education of our youth.

It is undoubtedly our duty, while we are instilling principles into the tender mind, to take peculiar care that those principles be sound and just; that the religion we teach be the religion of the Bible, and not the inventions of human error or superstition: that the principles we infuse into others, be such as we ourselves have well scrutinized, and not the result of our credulity or bigotry; nor the mere hereditary, unexamined prejudices of our own undiscerning childhood. It may also be granted, that it is the duty of every parent to inform the youth, that when his faculties shall have so unfolded themselves, as to enable him to examine for himself those principles which the parent is now instilling, it will be his duty so to examine them.

But after making these concessions, I would most seriously insist that there are certain leading and fundamental truths; that there are certain sentiments on the side of Christianity, as well as of virtue and benevolence, in favour of which every child *ought* to be prepossessed; and may it not be also added, that to expect to keep the mind

mind void of all prepoſſeſſion, even upon any ſubject, appears to be altogether a vain and impracticable attempt? an attempt, the very ſuggeſtion of which argues much ignorance of human nature.

Let it be obſerved here, that we are not combating the infidel; that we are not producing evidences and arguments in *favour* of Chriſtianity, or trying to win over the aſſent of the reader to that which he diſputes; but that we are taking it for granted, not only that Chriſtianity is true, but that we are addreſſing thoſe who believe it to be true: an aſſumption which has been made throughout this work. Aſſuming, therefore, that there are religious principles which are true, and which ought to be communicated in the moſt effectual manner, the next queſtion which ariſes ſeems to be, at what age and in what manner theſe ought to be inculcated? That it ought to be at an early period we have both the example and the command of Chriſt; for he himſelf attended his parents in their annual public devotions at Jeruſalem during his own infancy; and afterwards in his public miniſtration encouragingly ſaid, "Suffer *little* "children to come unto me."

But here conceding for the ſake of argument what yet cannot be conceded, that ſome good reaſons *may* be brought in favour of delay; allowing that ſuch impreſſions as are communicated early may not be very deep; allowing them even

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to become totally effaced by the ſubſequent corruptions of the heart and of the world; ſtill I would illuſtrate the importance of early infuſing religious knowledge, by an alluſion drawn from the power of early habit in human learning. Put the caſe, for inſtance, of a perſon who was betimes initiated in the rudiments of claſſical ſtudies. Suppoſe him after quitting ſchool to have fallen, either by a courſe of idleneſs or of vulgar purſuits, into a total neglect of ſtudy. Should this perſon at any future period happen to be called to ſome profeſſion, which ſhould oblige him, as we ſay, to rub up his Greek and Latin; his memory ſtill retaining the unobliterated though faint traces of his early purſuits, he will be able to recover his neglected learning with leſs difficulty that he could now begin to learn; for he is not again obliged to ſet out with ſtudying the ſimple elements; they come back on being purſued; they are found on being ſearched for; the decayed images aſſume ſhape, and ſtrength, and colour; he has in his mind firſt principles to which to recur; the rules of grammar which he has allowed himſelf to violate, he has not however forgotten; he will recall neglected ideas, he will reſume ſlighted habits far more eaſily than he could now begin to acquire new ones. I appeal to clergymen who are called to attend the dying beds of ſuch as have been bred in groſs and ſtupid ignorance of religion, for the juſtneſs of this compariſon. Do they

they not find that theſe unhappy people have no ideas in common with them? that *they* poſſeſs no intelligible medium by which to make themſelves underſtood? that the perſons to whom they are addreſſing themſelves have no firſt principles to which they can be referred? that they are ignorant not only of the ſcience, but the language of Chriſtianity?

But at worſt, whatever be the event to the child, though in general we are encouraged, from the tenor of Scripture and the courſe of experience, to hope that that event would be favourable, is it nothing for the parent to have acquitted himſelf of this prime duty? And will not the parent who ſo acquits himſelf, with better reaſon and more lively hope ſupplicate the Father of mercies for the reclaiming of a prodigal, who has wandered out of that right path in which he has ſet him forward, than for the converſion of a neglected creature, to whoſe feet the Goſpel had never been offered as a light? And how different will be the dying reflections even of that parent whoſe earneſt endeavours have been unhappily defeated by the ſubſequent and voluntary perverſion of his child, from his who will reaſonably aggravate his pangs by tranſferring the ſins of his neglected child to the number of his own tranſgreſſions!

And to ſuch well-intentioned but ill-judging parents as really wiſh their children to be hereafter pious, but erroneouſly withhold inſtruction

till the more advanced period preſcribed by the great maſter of ſplendid paradoxes* ſhall arrive; who can aſſure them that while they are withholding the good ſeed, the great and ever vigilant enemy, who aſſiduouſly ſeizes hold on every opportunity which *we* ſlight, and cultivates every advantage which *we* neglect, may not be ſtocking the fallow ground with tares? Nay, who in this fluctuating ſcene of things can be aſſured, even if this were not certainly to be the caſe, that to them the promiſed period ever ſhall arrive at all? Who ſhall aſcertain to them that their now neglected child ſhall certainly live to receive the delayed inſtruction? Who can aſſure them that they themſelves will live to communicate it?

It is almoſt needleſs to obſerve that parents who are indifferent about religion, much more thoſe who treat it with ſcorn, are not likely to be anxious on this ſubject; it is therefore the attention of *religious* parents which is here chiefly called upon; and the more ſo, as there ſeems, on this point, an unaccountable negligence in many of theſe, whether it ariſe from indolence, falſe principles, or whatever other motive.

But independent of knowledge, it is ſomething, nay, let philoſophers ſay what they will, it

* Rouſſeau.

it is much, to give youth *prepoſſeſſions* in favour of religion, to ſecure their *prejudices* on its ſide before you turn them adrift into the world; a world in which, before they can be completely armed with arguments and reaſons, they will be aſſailed by numbers whoſe prepoſſeſſions and prejudices, far more than *their* arguments and reaſons, attach them to the other ſide. Why ſhould not the Chriſtian youth furniſh himſelf in the beſt cauſe with the ſame natural armour which the enemies of religion wear in the worſt? It is certain that to ſet out in life with ſentiments in favour of the religion of our country is no more an error or a weakneſs, than to grow up with a fondneſs for our country itſelf. If the love of our country be judged a fair principle, ſurely a Chriſtian who is "a "citizen of no mean city," may lawfully have *his* attachments too. If patriotiſm be an honeſt prejudice, Chriſtianity is not a ſervile one. Nay, let us teach the youth to hug his prejudices, to glory in his prepoſſeſſions, rather than to acquire that verſatile and accommodating citizenſhip of the world, by which he may be an Infidel in Paris, a Papiſt at Rome, and a Muſſulman at Cairo.

Let me not be ſuppoſed ſo to elevate politics, or ſo to depreſs religion, as to make any compariſon of the value of the one with the other, when I obſerve, that between the true Britiſh patriot and the true Chriſtian, there will be this

common reſemblance: the more deeply each of them inquires, the more will he be confirmed in his reſpective attachment, the one to his country, the other to his religion. I ſpeak with reverence of the immeaſurable diſtance; but the more the one preſſes on the firm arch of our conſtitution, and the other on that of Chriſtianity, the ſtronger he will find them both. Each challenges ſcrutiny; each has nothing to dread but from ſhallow politicians and ſhallow philoſophers; in each intimate knowledge juſtifies prepoſſeſſion; in each inveſtigation confirms attachment.

If we divide the human being into three component parts, the bodily, the intellectual, and the ſpiritual, is it not reaſonable that a portion of care and attention be aſſigned to each in ſome degree adequate to its importance? Should I venture to ſay a *due* portion, a portion adapted to the real comparative value of each, would not that condemn in one word the whole ſyſtem of modern education? The rational and intellectual part being avowedly more valuable than the bodily, while the ſpiritual and immortal part exceeds even the intellectual ſtill more than that ſurpaſſes what is corporeal; is it acting according to the common rules of proportion; is it acting on the principles of diſtributive juſtice; is it acting with that good ſenſe and right judgment with which the ordinary buſineſs of this world is uſually tranſacted, to give

give the larger proportion of time and care to that which is worth the leaſt? Is it fair that what relates to the body and the organs of the body, I mean thoſe accompliſhments which addreſs themſelves to the eye and the ear, ſhould occupy almoſt the whole thoughts; that the intellectual part ſhould be robbed of its due proportion, and that the ſpiritual part ſhould have almoſt no proportion at all? Is not this preparing your children for an awful diſappointment in the tremendous day when they ſhall be ſtripped of that body, of thoſe ſenſes and organs, which have been made almoſt the ſole objects of their attention, and ſhall feel themſelves left in poſſeſſion of nothing but that ſpiritual part which in education was ſcarcely taken into the account of their exiſtence?

Surely it ſhould be thought a reaſonable compromiſe (and I am in fact undervaluing the object for the importance of which I plead) to ſuggeſt, that at leaſt two thirds of that time which is now uſurped by externals, ſhould be reſtored to the rightful owners, the underſtanding and the heart; and that the acquiſition of religious knowledge in early youth, ſhould at leaſt be *no leſs* an object of ſedulous attention than the cultivation of human learning or of outward embelliſhments. It is alſo not unreaſonable to ſuggeſt, that we ſhould in Chriſtianity, as in arts, ſciences, or languages, begin with

with the beginning, ſet out with the ſimple elements, and thus "go on unto perfection."

Why in teaching to draw do you begin with ſtraight lines and curves, till by gentle ſteps the knowledge of outline and proportion be attained, and your picture be completed; never loſing ſight, however, of the elementary lines and curves? why in muſic do you ſet out with the ſimple notes, and purſue the acquiſition through all its progreſs, ſtill in every ſtage recurring to the notes? why in the ſcience of numbers do you invent the ſimpleſt methods of conveying juſt ideas of computation, ſtill referring to the tables which involve the fundamental rules? why in the ſcience of quantity do men introduce the pupil at firſt to the plaineſt diagrams, and clear up one difficulty before they allow another to appear? why in teaching languages to the youth do you ſedulouſly infuſe into his mind the rudiments of ſyntax? why in parſing is he led to refer every word to its part of ſpeech, to reſolve every ſentence into its elements, to reduce every term to its original, and from the firſt caſe of nouns, and the firſt tenſe of verbs, to explain their formations, changes, and dependencies, till the principles of language become ſo grounded, that, by continually recurring to the rules, ſpeaking and writing correctly are fixed into a habit? why all this, but becauſe you uniformly wiſh him to be grounded in each of his acquirements? why,

why, but becauſe you are perſuaded that a flight, and ſlovenly, and ſuperficial, and irregular way of inſtruction will never train him to excellence in any thing?

Do young perſons then become muſicians, and painters, and linguiſts, and mathematicians, by early ſtudy and regular labour; and ſhall they become Chriſtians by accident? or rather, is not this acting on that very principle of Dogberry, at which you probably have often laughed? Is it not ſuppoſing that religion, like "reading and writing, comes by Nature?" Shall all thoſe accompliſhments "which periſh "in the uſing," be ſo aſſiduouſly, ſo ſyſtematically taught? Shall all thoſe habits, which are limited to the things of this world, be ſo carefully formed, ſo perſiſted in, as to be interwoven with our very make, ſo as to become as it were a part of ourſelves; and ſhall that knowledge which is to make us "wiſe unto "ſalvation" be picked up at random, curſorily, or perhaps not picked up at all? Shall that difficult divine ſcience which requires "line upon "line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little;" that knowledge which parents, even under a darker diſpenſation, were required "to teach their children *diligently*, and "to talk of it when they ſat down in their "houſe, and when they walked by the way, "and when they lay down, and when they "roſe up;" ſhall this knowledge be by Chriſtian

tian parents deferred, or taught ſlightly; or be ſuperſeded by things of comparatively little worth?

Shall the lively period of youth, the ſoft and impreſſible ſeaſon when laſting habits are formed, when the ſeal cuts deep into the yielding wax, and the impreſſion is more likely to be clear, and ſtrong, and laſting; ſhall this warm and favourable ſeaſon be ſuffered to ſlide by, without being turned to the great purpoſe for which not only youth, but life, and breath, and being were beſtowed? Shall not that "faith without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe "God;" ſhall not that "holineſs without "which no man can ſee the Lord;" ſhall not that knowledge which is the foundation of faith and practice; ſhall not that charity without which all knowledge is ſounding braſs and a tinkling cymbal, be impreſſed, be inculcated, be enforced, as early, as conſtantly, as fundamentally, with the ſame earneſt puſhing on to continual progreſs, with the ſame conſtant reference to firſt principles, as are uſed in the caſe of thoſe arts which merely adorn human life? Shall we not ſeize the happy period when the memory is ſtrong, the mind and all its powers vigorous and active, the imagination buſy and all alive; the heart flexible, the temper ductile, the conſcience tender, curioſity awake, fear powerful, hope eager, love ardent; ſhall

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we not ſeize this period for inculcating that knowledge, and impreſſing thoſe principles which are to form the character, and fix the deſtination for eternity?

Or, if I may be allowed to addreſs another and a ſtill more dilatory claſs, who are for procraſtinating all concern about religion till we are driven to it by actual diſtreſs, and who do not think of praying till they are periſhing, like the ſailor who ſaid, "he thought it was always "time enough to begin to pray when the ſtorm "began." Of theſe I would aſk, ſhall we, with an unaccountable deliberation, defer our anxiety about religion till the buſy man or the diſſipated woman are become ſo immerſed in the cares of life, or ſo entangled in its pleaſures, that they will have little heart or ſpirit to embrace a new principle? a principle whoſe preciſe object it will be to condemn that very life into which they have already embarked; nay, to condemn almoſt all that they have been doing and thinking ever ſince they firſt began to act or think? Shall we, I ſay, begin now? or ſhall we ſuffer thoſe inſtructions, to receive which requires all the concentrated powers of a ſtrong and healthy mind, to be put off till the day of excruciating pain, till the period of debility and ſtupefaction? Shall we wait for that ſeaſon, as if it were the moſt favourable for religious acquiſitions, when the ſenſes ſhall have been palled by exceſſive gratification, when

the eye ſhall be tired with ſeeing, and the ear with hearing? Shall we, when the whole man is breaking up by diſeaſe or decay, expect that the dim apprehenſion will diſcern a new ſcience, or the obtuſe feelings delight themſelves with a new pleaſure? a pleaſure too, not only incompatible with many of the hitherto indulged pleaſures, but one which carries with it a ſtrong intimation that thoſe pleaſures terminate in the death of the ſoul.

But, not to loſe ſight of the important analogy on which we have already dwelt ſo much; how prepoſterous would it ſeem to you to hear any one propoſe to an illiterate dying man, to ſet about learning even the plaineſt and eaſieſt rudiments of any new art; to ſtudy the muſical notes; to conjugate an auxiliary verb; to learn, not the firſt problem in Euclid, but even the numeration table; and yet you do not think it abſurd to poſtpone religious inſtruction, on principles which, if admitted at all, muſt terminate either in ignorance, or in your propoſing too late to a dying man to begin to learn the totally unknown ſcheme of Chriſtianity. You do not think it impoſſible that he ſhould be brought to liſten to the "voice of this charmer," when he can no longer liſten to "the voice of ſinging men and ſinging women." You do not think it unreaſonable that immortal beings ſhould delay to devote their days to Heaven, till they have "no pleaſure in them" themſelves.

themſelves. You will not bring them to offer up the firſt fruits of their lips, and hearts, and lives, to their Maker, becauſe you perſuade yourſelves that he who has called himſelf a "jealous God," may however be contented hereafter with the wretched ſacrifice of decayed appetites, and the worthleſs leavings of almoſt extinguiſhed affections.

One cannot believe, even with all the melancholy procraſtination we ſee around us, that there is ſcarcely any one, except he be a decided infidel, who does not conſider religion as at leaſt a good reverſionary thing; as an object which ought always to occupy a little remote corner of his map of life; the ſtudy of which, though it is always to be poſtponed, is however not to be finally rejected; which, though it cannot conveniently come into his preſent ſcheme of life, it is intended ſomehow or other to take up before death. This awful deception, this defect in the intellectual viſion, ariſes, partly from the bulk which the objects of time and ſenſe acquire in our eyes by their nearneſs; while the inviſible realities of eternity are but faintly diſcerned by a feeble faith, through a dim and diſtant medium. It ariſes alſo partly from a totally falſe idea of the nature of Chriſtianity, from a fatal fancy that we can repent at any future period, and that as amendment is a thing which will always be in our own power,

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it will be time enough to think of reforming our life, when we ſhould only think of cloſing it.

But depend upon it, that a heart long hardened, I do not mean by groſs vices merely, but by a fondneſs for the world, by an habitual and exceſſive indulgence in the pleaſures of ſenſe, will by no means be in a favourable ſtate to admit the light of divine truth, or to receive the impreſſions of divine grace. God indeed ſometimes ſhows us by an act of his ſovereignty, that this wonderful change, the converſion of a ſinner's heart, may be produced without the intervention of human means, to ſhow that the work is His. But as this is not the way in which the Almighty uſually deals with his creatures, it would be nearly as prepoſterous for men to act on this preſumption, and ſin on in hopes of a miraculous converſion, as it would be to take no means for the preſervation of our lives, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt raiſed Lazarus from the dead.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

On the manner of inſtructing young perſons in Religion.—General remarks on the genius of Chriſtianity.

I WOULD now with great deference addreſs thoſe reſpectable characters who are really concerned about the beſt intereſts of their children; thoſe to whom Chriſtianity is indeed an important conſideration, but whoſe habits of life have hitherto hindered them from giving it its due degree in the ſcale of education.

Begin then with conſidering that religion is a part, and the moſt prominent part, in your ſyſtem of inſtruction. Do not communicate its principles in a random deſultory way; nor ſcantily ſtint this buſineſs to only ſuch ſcraps and remnants of time as may be caſually picked up from the gleanings of other acquirements. "Willl you bring to God for a ſacrifice that "which coſts you nothing?" Let the beſt part of the day, which with moſt people is the earlieſt part, be ſteadily and invariably dedicated to this work by your children, before they are tired with their other ſtudies, while the intellect is clear, the ſpirits light, and the attention unfatigued.

Confine

Confine not your inſtructions to mere verbal rituals and dry ſyſtems; but inſtruct them in a way which ſhall intereſt their feelings, by lively images, and by a warm practical application of what they read to their own hearts and circumſtances. If you do not ſtudy the great but too much ſlighted art of fixing, of commanding, of chaining the attention, you may throw away much time and labour, with little other effect than that of diſguſting your pupil and wearying yourſelf. There ſeems to be no good reaſon that while every other thing is to be made amuſing, religion alone muſt be dry and uninviting. Do not fancy that a thing is good merely becauſe it is dull. Why ſhould not the moſt entertaining powers of the human mind be ſupremely conſecrated to that ſubject which is moſt worthy of their full exerciſe? The misfortune is, that religious learning is too often rather conſidered as an act of the memory than of the heart and affections; and that children are turned over to the dry work of getting by rote as a taſk that which they ſhould get from example, from animated converſation, from lively diſcuſſion, in which the pupil ſhould learn to bear a part, inſtead of being merely a paſſive hearer. Teach them rather, as their Bleſſed Saviour taught, by intereſting parables, which, while they corrected the heart, left ſome exerciſe for the ingenuity in the ſolution, and for the feelings in their application. Teach,

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as HE taught, by ſeizing on ſurrounding objects, paſſing events, local circumſtances, peculiar characters, apt alluſions, juſt analogy, appropriate illuſtration. Call in all creation, animate and inanimate, to your aid, and accuſtom your young audience to

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in ſtones, and good in every thing.

Even when the nature of your ſubject makes it neceſſary for you to be more plain and didactic, do not fail frequently to enliven theſe leſs engaging parts of your diſcourſe with ſome incidental imagery which ſhall captivate the fancy. Relieve what would otherwiſe be too dry and preceptive, with ſome ſtriking exemplification in point, ſome touching inſtance to be imitated, ſome awful warning to be avoided; ſomething which ſhall illuſtrate your inſtruction, which ſhall realize your poſition, which ſhall embody your idea, and give ſhape and form, colour and life, to your precept. Endeavour unremittingly to connect the reader with the ſubject, by making her feel that what you teach is neither an abſtract truth, nor a thing of mere general information, but that it is a buſineſs in which *ſhe herſelf* is individually and immediately concerned; in which not only her eternal ſalvation but her *preſent* happineſs is involved. Do, according to your meaſure of ability, what the Holy Spirit which indited the Scriptures

Scriptures has done, always take the ſenſibility of the learner into your account of the faculties which are to be worked upon. "For the doc-"trines of the Bible," as the profound and enlightened Bacon obſerves, "are not propoſed to "us in a naked logical form, but arrayed in "the moſt beautiful and ſtriking colours which "creation affords." By thoſe affecting illuſtrations uſed by Him "who knew what was in "man," and therefore beſt knew how to addreſs him, it was, that the unlettered audiences of Chriſt and his Apoſtles were enabled both to comprehend and to reliſh doctrines, which would not readily have made their way to their underſtandings, had they not firſt touched their hearts; and which would have found acceſs to neither the one nor the other, had they been delivered in dry ſcholaſtic diſquiſitions. Now thoſe audiences not being learned, may be ſuppoſed to have been nearly in the ſtate of children, as to their receptive faculties, and to have required nearly the ſame ſort of inſtruction; that is, they were more capable of being affected with what was ſimple, and touching, and lively, than what was elaborate, abſtruſe, and unaffecting. Heaven and earth were made to furniſh their contributions, when man was to be taught that ſcience which was to make him wiſe unto ſalvation. Something which might enforce or illuſtrate was borrowed from every element. The appearances of the ſky,

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the ſtorms of the ocean, the birds of the air, the beaſts of the field, the fruits of the earth, the ſeed and the harveſt, the labours of the huſbandmen, the ſeaſons of the year!

If that be the pureſt eloquence which moſt perſuades, and which comes home to the heart with the fulleſt evidence and the moſt irreſiſtible force, then no eloquence is ſo powerful as that of Scripture: and an intelligent Chriſtian teacher will be admoniſhed by the mode of Scripture itſelf, how to communicate its truths with life and ſpirit; "while he is muſing, the "fire burns:" that fire which will preſerve him from an inſipid and freezing mode of inſtruction. He will moreover, as was ſaid above, always carefully keep up a quick ſenſe of the perſonal intereſt the pupil has in every religious inſtruction which is impreſſed upon him. He will teach as Paul prayed, "with the ſpirit, "and with the underſtanding alſo;" and in imitating this great model, he will neceſſarily avoid the oppoſite faults of two different ſorts of inſtructors; for while ſome of our divines of the higher claſs have been too apt to preach as if mankind had only intellect, and the lower and more popular ſort as if they had only paſſions, do you borrow what is good from both, and addreſs your pupils as beings compounded of both underſtanding and affections *.

Fancy

* The zeal and diligence with which the Biſhop of London's weekly lectures have been attended by perſons of

Fancy not that the Bible is too difficult and intricate to be preſented in its own naked form, and that it puzzles and bewilders the youthful underſtanding. In all needful and indiſpenſable points of knowledge, the darkneſs of Scripture, as a great Chriſtian philoſopher † has obſerved, "is but a partial darkneſs, like that of "Egypt, which benighted only the enemies of "God, while it left his children in clear day." It is not pretended that the Bible will *find* in the reader clear views of God and of Chriſt, of the ſoul and eternity, but that it will *give* them. And if it be really the appropriate character of Scripture, as it tells us itſelf that it is, "to enlighten the eyes of the *blind*," and "to make wiſe the *ſimple*," then it as well calculated for the youthful and uninformed as for any other claſs; and as it was never expected that the greater part of Chriſtians ſhould be learned, ſo is learning, though of ineſtimable value in a *teacher* of theology, no *eſſential* qualification

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of all ranks and deſcriptions, but more eſpecially by that claſs to whom this little work is addreſſed, is a very promiſing circumſtance for the age. And while one conſiders with pleaſure the advantages peculiarly to be derived by the young from ſo intereſting and animated an expoſition of the Goſpel, one is further led to rejoice at the countenance given by ſuch high authority to the revival of that excellent, but too much neglected practice of lectures.

† Mr. Boyle.

lification for a common Chriſtian: for which reaſon Scripture truths are expreſſed with that clear and ſimple evidence adapted to the kind of aſſent which they require; an aſſent materially different from that ſort of demonſtration which a mathematical theorem demands. He who could bring an unprejudiced heart and an unperverted will, would bring to the Scriptures the beſt qualification for underſtanding and receiving them. And though they contain things which the pupil cannot comprehend, (as what ancient poet, hiſtorian, or orator does not,) the teacher may addreſs to him the words which Chriſt addreſſed to Peter, "What I do thou "knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know here-"after."

Young people who have been taught religion in a formal and ſuperficial way, who have had all its drudgeries and none of its pleaſures, will probably have acquired ſo little reliſh for it, as to conſider the continued proſecution of their religious ſtudies as a badge of their tutelage, as a mark that they are ſtill under ſubjection; and will look forward with impatience to the hour of their emancipation from the lectures on Chriſtianity, as the æra of their promiſed liberty. They will long for the period when its leſſons ſhall ceaſe to be delivered; will conclude that, having once attained ſuch an age, and arrived at the required proficiency, the object will be accompliſhed and the labour at an end. But let

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not *your* children "ſo learn Chriſt." Apprize them that no ſpecific day will ever arrive on which they ſhall ſay, I *have* attained; but inform them, that every acquiſition muſt be followed up; knowledge muſt be increaſed; prejudices ſubdued; good habits rooted; evil ones eradicated; diſpoſitions ſtrengthened; principles confirmed; till going on from light to light, and from ſtrength to ſtrength, they come "to the "meaſure of the ſtature of the fullneſs of "Chriſt."

But though ſerious inſtruction will not only be unintereſting but irkſome if conveyed to youth in a cold didactic way, yet if their affections are ſuitably engaged, while their underſtandings are kept in exerciſe, their hearts, ſo far from neceſſarily revolting, as ſome inſiſt, will often receive the moſt ſolemn truths with alacrity. It is, as we have repeated, the manner which revolts them, and not the thing.

As it is notorious that men of wit and ſprightly fancy have been the moſt formidable enemies to Chriſtianity; while men, in whom thoſe talents have been conſecrated to God, have been ſome of her moſt uſeful champions, take particular care to preſs that ardent and ever-active power, the *imagination*, into the ſervice of religion; this bright and buſy faculty will be leading its poſſeſſor into perpetual peril, and is an enemy of peculiar potency till it come to be employed in the cauſe of God. It is a lion, which though worldly prudence

prudence indeed may *chain* ſo as to prevent outward miſchief, yet the malignity remains within; but when ſanctified by Chriſtianity, the imagination is a lion *tamed*; you have all the benefit of its ſtrength and its activity, diveſted of its miſchief. God never beſtowed that noble but reſtleſs faculty, without intending it to be an inſtrument of his own glory; though it has been too often ſet up in rebellion againſt him; becauſe, in its youthful ſtirrings, while all alive and full of action, it has not been ſeized upon to ſerve its rightful Sovereign, but was early enliſted with little oppoſition under the banners of the world, the fleſh, and the devil. Religion is the only ſubject in which, under the guidance of a ſevere and ſober-minded prudence, this diſcurſive faculty can ſafely ſtretch its powers and expand its energies. But let it be remembered, that it muſt be a ſound and genuine Chriſtianity which can alone ſo chaſtiſe and regulate the imagination, as to reſtrain it from thoſe errors and exceſſes into which a falſe, a miſtaken, an irregular religion, has too often led its injudicious and ill-inſtructed profeſſor. Some of the moſt fatal extremes into which a wild enthuſiaſm or a frightful ſuperſtition has plunged its unhappy votaries, have been owing to the want of a due direction, of a ſtrict and holy caſtigation of this ever-working faculty. To ſecure imagination, therefore, on the ſafe ſide, and, if I may change the metaphor, to put it under the direction of

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its true pilot in the ſtormy voyage of life, is like engaging thoſe potent elements, the wind and tide, in your favour.

In your communications with young people, take care to convince them that as religion is not a buſineſs to be laid aſide with the leſſon, ſo neither is it a ſingle branch of duty; ſome detached thing, which like the acquiſition of an art or a language, is to be practiſed ſeparately, and to have its diſtinct periods and modes of operation. But let them underſtand, that common acts, by the ſpirit in which they are to be performed, are to be made acts of religion; let them perceive that Chriſtianity may be conſidered as having ſomething of that influence over the conduct which external grace has over the manners; for as it is not the performance of ſome particular act which denominates any one to be graceful, grace being a ſpirit diffuſed through the whole ſyſtem, which animates every ſentiment, and informs every action; as ſhe who has true perſonal grace has it uniformly, and is not ſometimes awkward and ſometimes elegant; does not ſometimes lay it down and ſometimes take it up; ſo religion is not an occaſional act, but an indwelling principle, an inwrought habit, a pervading and informing ſpirit, from which indeed every act derives all its life, and energy, and beauty.

Give them clear views of the broad diſcrimination between practical religion and worldly morality;

morality; in ſhort, between the virtues of Chriſtians and of Pagans. Show them that no good qualities are genuine but ſuch as flow from the religion of Chriſt. Let them learn that the virtues which the better ſort of people, who yet are deſtitute of true Chriſtianity, inculcate and practiſe, reſemble thoſe virtues which have the love of God for their motive, juſt as counterfeit coin reſembles ſterling gold; they may have, it is true, certain points of reſemblance with the others; they may be bright and ſhining; they have perhaps the image and the ſuperſcription, but they ever want the true diſtinguiſhing properties; they want ſterling value, purity, and weight. They may indeed paſs current in the traffic of this world, but when brought to the touchſtone, they will be found full of alloy; when weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary, "they will be found wanting;" they will not ſtand that final trial which is to ſeparate "the "precious from the vile;" they will not abide "the day of *his* coming who is like a refiner's "fire."

One error into which even ſome good people are apt to fall, is that of endeavouring to deceive young minds by temporiſing expedients. In order to allure them to become religious, they exhibit falſe, or faint, or inadequate views of Chriſtianity; and while they repreſent it as it really is, as a life of ſuperior happineſs and advantage, they conceal its difficulties, and like

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the Jeſuitical Chineſe miſſionaries, extenuate, or ſink, or deny, ſuch parts of it as are leaſt alluring to human pride. In attempting to diſguiſe its principle, they deſtroy its efficacy. But beſides that, the project fails with them as it did with the Jeſuits; all fraud is bad in itſelf; and a pious fraud is a contradiction in terms, which ought to be buried in the rubbiſh of papal deſolation.

Inſtead of repreſenting to the young Chriſtian, that it may be poſſible by a prudent ingenuity at once to purſue, with equal ardour and ſucceſs, worldly fame and eternal glory, would it not be more honeſt to tell him fairly and unambiguouſly that there are two diſtinct roads between which there is a broad boundary line? that there are two contending and irreconcilable intereſts? that he muſt forſake the one if he would cleave to the other? that there are two ſorts of characters at eternal variance? that he muſt renounce the one if he is in earneſt for the other? that nothing ſhort of abſolute deciſion can make a confirmed Chriſtian? Point out the different ſorts of promiſes annexed to theſe different ſorts of characters. Confeſs in the language of Chriſt how the man of the world often obtains (and it is the natural courſe of human things) the recompenſe he ſedulouſly ſeeks. "Verily I ſay "unto you, they have their reward." Explain the beatitudes on the other hand; and unfold what kind of ſpecific reward is there individually promiſed

promiſed to its concomitant virtue. Show your pupil that to that "poverty of ſpirit" to which the kingdom of heaven is promiſed, it would be inconſiſtent to expect that the recompence of human commendation ſhould be alſo attached; that to that "purity of heart" to which the beatific viſion is annexed, it would be unreaſonable to ſuppoſe you can unite the praiſe of licentious wits, or the admiration of a catch-club. Theſe will be beſtowed on their appropriate and correſponding merits. Do not inliſt them under falſe colours; diſappointment will produce deſertion. Different ſorts of rewards are attached to different ſorts of ſervices; and while you truly aſſert that religion's ways are "ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace," take care that you do not lead them to depend too excluſively on worldly happineſs and earthly peace, for theſe make no part of the covenant; they may be ſuperadded, but they were never ſtipulated in the contract.

But if, in order to attract the young to a religious courſe, you diſingenuouſly conceal its difficulties, while you are juſtly enlarging upon its pleaſures, you will tempt them to diſtruſt the truth of Scripture itſelf. For what will they think, not only of a few detached texts, but of the general caſt and colour of the Goſpel, when contraſted with your repreſentation of it? What notion will they conceive of "the ſtrait gate" and "narrow way?" of the amputation of a

"right hand?" of the exciſion of a "right eye?" of the other ſtrong metaphors by which the Chriſtian warfare is ſhadowed out? of "crucifying the fleſh?" of "mortifying the "old man?" of "dying unto ſin?" of "over-"coming the world?" Do you not think their meek and compaſſionate Saviour who died for your children loved them as well as you love them? And if this were his language, ought it not to be yours? It is the language of true love; of that love with which a merciful God loved the world, when he ſpared not his own Son. Do not then try to conceal from them, that the life of a Chriſtian is neceſſarily oppoſite to the life of the world; and do not ſeek, by a vain attempt at accommodation, to reconcile that difference which Chriſt himſelf has pronounced to be irreconcileable.

May it not be partly owing to the want of a due introduction to the knowledge of the real nature and ſpirit of religion, that ſo many young Chriſtians, who ſet out in a fair and flouriſhing way, decline and wither when they come to perceive the requiſitions of experimental Chriſtianity? requiſitions which they had not ſuſpected of making any part of the plan; and from which, when they afterwards diſcover them, they ſhrink back, as not prepared and hardened for the unexpected conteſt.

People are no more to be cheated into religion than into learning. The ſame ſpirit which influences your oath in a court of juſtice ſhould

influence

influence your diſcourſe in that court of equity —your family. Your children ſhould be told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It is unneceſſary to add, that it muſt be done gradually and diſcreetly. We know whoſe example we have for poſtponing that which the mind is not yet prepared to receive: "I have "many things yet to ſay to you, but ye cannot "bear them *now*." Accuſtom them to reaſon by analogy. Explain to them that great *worldly* attainments are never made without great ſacrifices; that the merchant cannot become rich without induſtry; the ſtateſman eminent without labour; the ſcholar learned without ſtudy; the hero renowned without danger: would it not then, on human principles, be unreaſonable to think that the Chriſtian alone ſhould obtain a triumph without a warfare? the higheſt prize with the loweſt exertions? an eternal crown without a preſent croſs? and that heaven is the only reward which the idle may reckon upon? No: though ſalvation "be the *gift* of God," yet it muſt be "*worked out*." Convince your young friends, however, that in this caſe the difficulty of the battle bears no proportion to the prize of the victory. In one reſpect, indeed, the point of reſemblance fails, and that moſt advantageouſly for the Chriſtian; for while, even by the moſt probable means, which are the union of talents with diligence, no human proſperity can be *inſured* to the worldly candidate; while

the moſt ſucceſsful adventurer may fail by the fault of another; while the beſt concerted project of the ſtateſman may be cruſhed; the braveſt hero loſe the battle; the brighteſt genius fail of getting bread; and while, moreover, the pleaſure ariſing even from ſucceſs in theſe may be no ſooner taſted than it is poiſoned by a more proſperous rival; the perſevering Chriſtian is ſafe and certain of obtaining *his* object; no misfortunes can defeat *his* hope; no competition can endanger *his* ſucceſs; for though another gain, he will not loſe; nay, the ſucceſs of another, ſo far from diminiſhing his gain, is an addition to it; the more he diffuſes, the richer he grows; his bleſſings are enlarged by communication; and that mortal hour which cuts off for ever the hopes of worldly men, crowns and conſummates his.

Beware at the ſame time of ſetting up any act of ſelf-denial or mortification as the *procuring* cauſe of ſalvation. This would be a preſumptuous project to *purchaſe* that eternal life which is declared to be the "free *gift* of God." This would be to ſend your children, not to the Goſpel to learn their Chriſtianity, but to the Monks and Aſcetics of the middle ages; it would be ſending them to Peter the Hermit, and the holy fathers of the Deſert, and not to Peter the Apoſtle and his Divine Maſter. Mortification is not the price; it is nothing more than the diſcipline of a ſoul of which ſin is the diſeaſe, the diet

preſcribed

preſcribed by the great phyſician. Without this guard the young devout Chriſtian would be led to fancy that abſtinence, pilgrimage, and penance might be adopted as the cheap ſubſtitute for the ſubdued deſire, the reſiſted temptation, the conquered corruption, and the obedient will; and would be almoſt in as much danger, on the one hand, of ſelf-righteouſneſs ariſing from auſterities and mortification, as ſhe would be, on the other, from ſelf-gratification in the indulgences of the world. And while you carefully impreſs on her the neceſſity of living a life of ſtrict obedience if ſhe would pleaſe God, do not neglect to remind her alſo that a complete renunciation of her own performances as a ground of merit, *purchaſing* the favour of God by their own intrinſic worth, is included in that obedience.

It is of the laſt importance, in ſtamping on young minds a true impreſſion of the genius of Chriſtianity, to poſſeſs them with a conviction that it is the purity of the motive which not only gives worth and beauty, but which, in a Chriſtian ſenſe, gives life and ſoul to the beſt action: nay, that while a right intention will be acknowledged and accepted at the final judgment, even without the act, the act itſelf will be diſowned which wanted the baſis of a pure deſign. "Thou didſt "well that it was in thy *heart* to build me a "temple," ſaid the Almighty to that Monarch whom yet he permitted not to build it. How many ſplendid actions will be rejected in the great

great day of retribution, to which ſtatues and monuments have been raiſed on earth, while their almoſt deified authors ſhall be as much confounded at their own unexpected reprobation, as at the divine acceptance of thoſe "whoſe life the world counted madneſs." It is worthy of remark, that "Depart from me, I never knew "you," is not the malediction denounced on the ſceptic or the ſcoffer, on the profligate, and the libertine, but on the high profeſſor, on the unfruitful worker of "miracles," on the unſanctified utterer of "prophecies;" for even acts of piety wanting the purifying principle, however they may dazzle men, offend God. Cain ſacrificed, Balaam propheſied, Rouſſeau wrote the moſt ſublime panegyric on the *Son of Mary*, VOLTAIRE BUILT A CHURCH! nay, ſo ſuperior was *his* affectation of ſanctity, that he oſtentatiouſly declared, that while others were raiſing churches to *Saints*, there was one man at leaſt who would erect his church to *God**: that God whoſe altars he was overthrowing, whoſe name he was vilifying, whoſe goſpel he was exterminating, and the very name of whoſe Son he had ſolemnly pledged himſelf to blot from the face of the earth!

Though it be impoſſible here to enumerate all thoſe Chriſtian virtues which ſhould be impreſſed in the progreſs of a Chriſtian education, yet in this

* *Deo erexit Voltaire*, is the inſcription affixed by himſelf on his church at Ferney.

this connection I cannot forbear mentioning one which more immediately grows out of the ſubject; and to remark that the principle which ſhould be the invariable concomitant of all inſtruction, and eſpecially of religious inſtruction, is humility. As this temper is inculcated in every page of the Goſpel; as it is deducible from every precept and every action of Chriſt; that is a ſufficient intimation that it ſhould be made to grow out of every ſtudy, that it ſhould be grafted on every acquiſition. It is the turning point, the leading principle, indicative of the very genius, of the very being of Chriſtianity. This chaſtiſing quality ſhould therefore be conſtantly made in education to operate as the only counteraction of that "knowledge which puffeth up." Youth ſhould be taught that as humility is the diſcriminating characteriſtic of our religion, therefore a proud Chriſtian, a haughty diſciple of a crucified Maſter, furniſhes perhaps a ſtronger oppoſition in terms than the whole compaſs of language can exhibit. They ſhould be taught that humility being the appropriate grace of Chriſtianity, is preciſely the thing which makes Chriſtian and Pagan virtues *eſſentially* different. The virtues of the Romans, for inſtance, were obviouſly founded in pride; as a proof of this, they had not even a word in their copious language to expreſs humility, but what was uſed in a bad ſenſe, and conveyed the idea of meanneſs

or vileneſs, of baſeneſs and ſervility. Chriſtianity ſo ſtands on its own ſingle ground, is ſo far from aſſimilating itſelf to the ſpirit of other religions, that unlike the Roman Emperor, who though he would not become a Chriſtian, yet ordered that the image of Chriſt ſhould be ſet up in the Pantheon with thoſe of the heathen gods, and be worſhipped in common with them; Chriſtianity not only rejects all ſuch partnerſhips with other religions, but it pulls down their images, defaces their temples, tramples on their honours, founds its own exiſtence on the ruins of ſpurious religions and ſpurious virtues, and will be every thing when it is admitted to be any thing.

Will it be going too much out of the way to obſerve, that Chriſtian Britain retaliates upon Pagan Rome? For if the former uſed humility in a bad ſenſe, has not the latter learnt to uſe pride in a good one? May we, without impertinence, venture to remark, that, in the deliberations of as honourable and upright political aſſemblies as ever adorned, or, under Providence, upheld a country; in orations which leave us nothing to envy in Attic or Roman eloquence in their beſt days: it were to be wiſhed that we did not borrow from Rome an epithet which ſuited the genius of her religion, as much as it militates againſt that of ours? The panegyriſt of the battle of Marathon, of Platea, or of Zama, might with propriety ſpeak of a "proud day,"

or

or a "proud event," or a "proud ſucceſs." But ſurely the Chriſtian encomiaſts of the battle of the Nile might, from their abundance, ſelect an epithet better appropriated to ſuch a victory —a victory which, by preſerving Europe, has perhaps preſerved that religion which ſets its foot on the very neck of pride, and in which the conqueror himſelf, even in the firſt ardors of triumph, forgot not to aſcribe the victory to ALMIGHTY GOD. Let us leave to the enemy both the term and the thing; arrogant words being the only weapons in which we muſt ever vail to their decided ſuperiority. As we muſt deſpair of the victory, let us diſdain the conteſt.

Above all things then you ſhould beware that your pupils do not take up with a vague, general, and undefined religion; but look to it that their Chriſtianity be really the religion of Chriſt. Inſtead of ſlurring over the doctrines of the Croſs, as diſreputable appendages to our religion, which are to be diſguiſed or got over as well as we can, but which are never to be dwelt upon, take care to make theſe your grand fundamental articles. Do not dilute, or explain away theſe doctrines, and by ſome elegant periphraſis *hint* at a Saviour, inſtead of making him the foundation ſtone of your ſyſtem. Do not convey primary, and plain, and awful, and indiſpenſable truths elliptically, I mean as ſomething that is to be underſtood without being expreſſed; nor ſtudy faſhionable circumlocutions to avoid names and things on

which our ſalvation hangs, in order to prevent your diſcourſe from being offenſive. Perſons who are thus inſtructed in religion with more good-breeding than ſerioufneſs and ſimplicity, imbibe a diſtaſte for plain ſcriptural language; and the Scriptures themſelves are ſo little in uſe with a certain faſhionable claſs of readers, that when the doctrines and language of the Bible occaſionally occur in other authors, or in converſation, they preſent a ſort of novelty and peculiarity which offend; and ſuch readers as diſuſe the Bible are apt, from a ſuppoſed delicacy of taſte, to call that preciſe and puritanical which is in fact ſound and ſcriptural. Nay, it has ſeveral times happened to the author to hear perſons of ſenſe and learning ridicule inſulated ſentiments and expreſſions that have fallen in their way, which they would have treated with decent reſpect had they known them to be, as they really were, texts of Scripture. This obſervation is hazarded with a view to enforce the importance of early communicating religious knowledge, and of infuſing an early taſte for the venerable phraſeology of Scripture.

The perſons in queſtion thus poſſeſſing a kind of Pagan Chriſtianity, are apt to acquire a ſort of Pagan expreſſion alſo, which juſt enables them to ſpeak with complacency of the "Deity," of a "firſt cauſe," and of "conſcience." Nay, ſome may even go ſo far as to talk of "the Founder of our religion," of the "Author of "Chriſtianity,"

"Chriſtianity," in the ſame general terms, as they would talk of the prophet of Arabia, or the lawgiver of China, of Athens, or of the Jews. But their refined ears revolt not a little at the unadorned name of Chriſt; and eſpecially the naked and unqualified term of our Saviour, or Redeemer, carries with it a queeriſh, inelegant, not to ſay a ſuſpicious ſound. They will expreſs a ſerious diſapprobation of what is wrong, under the moral term of *vice*, or the forenſic term of *crime*; but they are apt to think that the Scripture term of *ſin* has ſomething fanatical in it; and, while they diſcover a great reſpect for morality, they do not much reliſh holineſs, which is indeed the ſpecific and only morality of a Chriſtian. They will ſpeak readily of a man's reforming, or leaving off a vicious habit, or growing more correct in ſome individual practice; but the idea conveyed under any of the Scripture phraſes ſignifying a total change of heart, they would ſtigmatize as the very ſhibboleth of a ſect, though it is the language of a Liturgy they affect to admire, and of a Goſpel which they profeſs to receive.

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CHAPTER XII.

Hints ſuggeſted for furniſhing young perſons with a ſcheme of prayer.

THOSE who are aware of the ineſtimable value of prayer themſelves, will naturally be anxious not only that this duty ſhould be earneſtly inculcated on their children, but that they ſhould be taught it in the beſt manner; and *ſuch* parents need little perſuaſion or counſel on the ſubject. Yet children of decent and orderly (I will not ſay of ſtrictly religious) families are often ſo ſuperficially inſtructed in this important buſineſs, that it is not unuſual, when they are aſked what prayers they uſe, to anſwer, "the Lord's Prayer "and the *Creed*." And even ſome who are better taught, are not always made to underſtand with ſufficient clearneſs the ſpecific diſtinction between the two; that the one is the confeſſion of their *faith*, and the other the model for their *ſupplications*. By this confuſed and indiſtinct beginning, they ſet out with a perplexity in their ideas, which is not always completely diſentangled in more advanced life.

An intelligent mother will ſeize the firſt occaſion which the child's opening underſtanding ſhall

ſhall allow, for making a little courſe of lectures on the Lord's prayer, taking every diviſion or ſhort ſentence ſeparately; for each furniſhes valuable materials for a diſtinct lecture. The child ſhould be led gradually through every part of this divine compoſition; ſhe ſhould be taught to break it into all the regular diviſions, into which indeed it ſo naturally reſolves itſelf. She ſhould be made to comprehend one by one each of its ſhort but weighty ſentences; to amplify and ſpread them out for the purpoſe of better underſtanding them, not in their moſt extenſive and critical ſenſe, but in their moſt ſimple and obvious meaning. For in thoſe condenſed and ſubſtantial expreſſions every word is an ingot, and will bear beating out; ſo that the teacher's difficulty will not ſo much be what ſhe ſhall ſay as what ſhe ſhall ſuppreſs; ſo abundant is the expoſitory matter which this ſuccinct pattern ſuggeſts.

When the child has a pretty good conception of the meaning of each diviſion, ſhe ſhould then be made to obſerve the connection, relation, and dependance of the ſeveral parts of this prayer one upon another; for there is great method and connection in it. We pray that the "kingdom "of God may come," as the beſt means to "hallow his name;" and that by us, the obedient ſubjects of his kingdom, "his will may "be done." A judicious interpreter will obſerve how logically and conſequently one clauſe grows

out

out of another, though ſhe will uſe neither the word logical nor conſequence; for all explanations ſhould be made in the moſt plain and familiar terms, it being words, and not things, which commonly perplex children, if, as it ſometimes happens, the teacher, though not wanting ſenſe, want perſpicuity and ſimplicity.

The young perſon, from being made a complete miſtreſs of this ſhort compoſition, (which as it is to be her guide and model through life, too much pains cannot be beſtowed on it,) will have a clearer conception, not only of its individual contents, but of prayer in general, than many ever attain, though their memory has been perhaps loaded with long and unexplained forms, which they have been accuſtomed to ſwallow in the lump without ſcrutiny, and without diſcrimination. Prayer ſhould not be ſo ſwallowed. It is a regular preſcription, which ſhould ſtand analyſis and examination: it is not a charm, the ſucceſsful operation of which depends on your blindly taking it, without knowing what is in it, and in which the good you receive is promoted by your ignorance of its contents.

I would have it underſtood that by theſe little comments, I do not mean that the child ſhould be put to learn dry, and to her unintelligible expoſitions; but that the expoſition is to be colloquial. And here I muſt remark in general, that the teacher is ſometimes unreaſonably apt to relieve herſelf at the child's expence, by loading the

the *memory* of a little creature on occaſions in which far other faculties ſhould be put in exerciſe. The child herſelf ſhould be made to furniſh a good part of this extemporaneous commentary by her anſwers; in which anſwers ſhe will be much aſſiſted by the judgment the teacher uſes in her manner of queſtioning. And the youthful underſtanding, when its powers are properly ſet at work, will ſoon ſtrengthen by exerciſe, ſo as to furniſh reaſonable if not very correct anſwers.

Written forms of prayer are not only uſeful and proper, but indiſpenſably neceſſary to begin with. But I will hazard the remark, that if children are thrown *excluſively* on the beſt forms, if they are made to commit them to memory like a copy of verſes, and to repeat them in a dry, cuſtomary way, they will produce little effect on their minds. They will not underſtand what they repeat, if we do not early open to them the important *ſcheme* of prayer. Without ſuch an elementary introduction to this duty, they will afterwards be either ignorant or enthuſiaſts, or both. We ſhould give them *knowledge* before we can expect them to make much progreſs in *piety*, and as a due preparative to it: Chriſtian inſtruction in this reſembling the ſun, who, in the courſe of his communications, gives light before he gives heat. And to labour to excite a ſpirit of devotion without firſt infuſing that knowledge

ledge out of which it is to grow, is practically reviving the popiſh maxim, that Ignorance is the mother of Devotion, and virtually adopting the popiſh rule, of praying in an unknown tongue.

Children, let me again obſerve, will not attend to their prayers if they do not underſtand them; and they will not underſtand them, if they are not taught to analyſe, to diſſect them, to know their component parts, and to methodiſe them.

It is not enough to teach them to conſider prayer under the general idea that it is an application to God for what they want, and an acknowledgment to Him for what they have. This, though true in the groſs, is not ſufficiently preciſe and correct. They ſhould learn to define and to arrange all the different parts of prayer. And as a preparative to prayer itſelf, they ſhould be impreſſed with as clear an idea as their capacity and the nature of the ſubject admit, of "HIM with whom they have to do." His omnipreſence is perhaps, of all his attributes, that of which we may make the firſt practical uſe. Every head of prayer is founded on ſome great ſcriptural truths, which truths the little analyſis here ſuggeſted will materially aſſiſt to fix in their minds.

On the knowledge that "God is," that he is an infinitely holy Being, and that "he is the rewarder

"rewarder of all them that diligently ſeek him," will be grounded the firſt part of prayer, which is *adoration*. The creature devoting itſelf to the Creator, or *ſelf-dedication*, next preſents itſelf. And if they are firſt taught that important truth, that as needy creatures they want help, which may be done by ſome eaſy analogy, they will eaſily be led to underſtand how naturally *petition* forms a moſt conſiderable branch of prayer: and divine grace being among the things for which they are to petition, this naturally ſuggeſts to the mind the doctrine of the influences of the Holy Spirit. And when to this is added the conviction, which will be readily worked into an ingenuous mind, that as offending creatures they want pardon, the neceſſity of *confeſſion* will eaſily be made intelligible to them. But they ſhould be brought to underſtand that it muſt not be ſuch a general and vague confeſſion as awakens no ſenſe of perſonal humiliation, as excites no recollection of their own more peculiar and individual faults. But it muſt be a confeſſion founded on ſelf-knowledge, which is itſelf to ariſe out of the practice of ſelf-examination: for want of this ſort of diſcriminating habit, a well-meaning but ill-inſtructed girl may catch herſelf confeſſing the ſins of ſome other perſon, and omitting thoſe which are more eſpecially her own. On the gladneſs of heart natural to youth, it will be leſs difficult to impreſs the delightful duty

duty of *thankſgiving*, which forms ſo conſiderable a branch of prayer. In this they ſhould be habituated to recapitulate not only their general, but to enumerate their peculiar, daily, and incidental mercies, in the ſame ſpecific manner as they ſhould have been taught to detail their individual and perſonal *wants* in the petitionary, and their *faults* in the confeſſional part. The ſame warmth of feeling which will more readily diſpoſe them to expreſs their gratitude to God in thankſgiving, will alſo lead them more gladly to expreſs their love to their parents and friends, by adopting another indiſpenſable, and to an affectionate heart, pleaſing part of prayer, which is *interceſſion*.

When they have been made, by a plain and perſpicuous mode of inſtruction, fully to underſtand the different nature of all theſe; and when they clearly comprehend that *adoration*, *ſelf-dedication*, *confeſſion*, *petition*, *thankſgiving*, and *interceſſion*, are diſtinct heads, which muſt not be involved in each other, you may exemplify the rules by pointing out to them theſe ſucceſſive branches in any well written form. And they will eaſily diſcern, that aſcription of glory to that God to whom we owe ſo much, and on whom we ſo entirely depend, is the concluſion into which a Chriſtian's prayer will naturally reſolve itſelf. It is hardly needful to remind the teacher that our truly Scriptural Liturgy invariably furniſhes the example of preſenting *every* requeſt

requeſt in the name of the great Mediator. In the Liturgy too they will meet with the beſt exemplifications of prayers, exhibiting ſeparate ſpecimens of each of the diſtinct heads we have been ſuggeſting.

But in order that the minds of young perſons may, without labour or difficulty, be gradually brought into ſuch a ſtate of preparation as to be benefited by ſuch a little courſe of lectures as we have recommended; they ſhould, from the time when they were firſt able to read, have been employing themſelves at their leiſure hours, in laying in a ſtore of proviſion for their preſent demands. And here the memory may be employed to good purpoſe; for being the firſt faculty which is ripened, and which is indeed perfected when the others are only beginning to unfold themſelves, this is an intimation of Providence that it ſhould be the firſt ſeized on for the beſt uſes. It ſhould therefore be devoted to lay in a ſtock of the more eaſy and devotional parts of Scripture. The Pſalms alone are an inexhauſtible ſtore-houſe of rich materials*. Children, whoſe minds have been early well furniſhed from theſe, will be competent

* This will be ſo far from ſpoiling the cheerfulneſs, or impeding the pleaſures of childhood, that the author knows a little girl who, before ſhe was ſeven years old, had learnt the whole Pſalter through a ſecond time; and that without any diminution of uncommon gaiety of ſpirits, or any interference with the elegant acquirements ſuited to her ſtation.

competent at nine or ten years old to produce from them, and to ſelect with no contemptible judgment ſuitable examples of all the parts of prayer; and will be able to extract and appropriate texts under each reſpective head, ſo as to exhibit, without help, complete ſpecimens of every part of prayer. By confining them entirely to the ſenſe, and nearly to the words of Scripture, they will be preſerved from enthuſiaſm, from irregularity, and conceit. By being obliged continually to apply for themſelves, they will get a habit in all their difficulties of "ſearching the Scriptures," which may be hereafter uſeful to them on other and more trying occaſions. But I would at firſt *confine* them to the Bible; for were they allowed with equal freedom to ranſack other books with a view to get helps to embelliſh their little compoſitions, or rather compilations, they might be tempted to paſs off for their own what they pick up from others, which might tend at once to make them both vain and deceitful. This is a temptation to which they are too much laid open when they get extravagantly commended for any pilfered paſſage with which they decorate their little themes and letters. But in the preſent inſtance there is no danger of any ſimilar deception, for there is ſuch a ſacred ſignature ſtamped on every Scripture phraſe, that the owner's name can never be defaced or torn off from the goods, either by fraud or violence.

It would be well, if in thoſe Pſalms which children were firſt directed to get by heart, an eye were had to this their future application; and that they were employed, but without any intimation of your ſubſequent deſign, in learning ſuch as may be beſt turned to this account. In the hundred and thirty-ninth, the firſt great truth to be imprinted on the young heart, the divine omnipreſence, as was before obſerved, is unfolded with ſuch a mixture of majeſtic grandeur, and ſuch an intereſting variety of intimate and local circumſtances, as is likely to ſeize on the quick and lively feelings of youth. The awful idea that that Being whom ſhe is taught to reverence, is not only *in general* "acquainted with all "ner ways," but that "he is about her path, and "about her bed," beſtows ſuch a ſenſe of real and preſent exiſtence on *him* of whom ſhe is apt to conceive as having his diſtant habitation only in Heaven, as will greatly help her to realize the ſenſe of his actual preſence.

The hundred and third Pſalm will open to the mind rich and abundant ſources of expreſſion for gratitude and thankſgiving, and it includes the acknowledgment of ſpiritual as well as temporal favours. It illuſtrates the compaſſionate mercies of God by familiar and domeſtic images, of ſuch peculiar tenderneſs and exquiſite endearment, as are calculated to ſtrike upon every chord of filial fondneſs in the heart of an affectionate child. The fifty-firſt ſupplies an infinite variety

of

of matter in whatever relates to confeſſion of ſin, or to ſupplication for the aids of the Spirit. The twenty-third abounds with captivating expreſſions of the protecting goodneſs and tender love of their heavenly Father, conveyed by paſtoral imagery of uncommon beauty and ſweetneſs: in ſhort, the greater part of theſe charming compoſitions overflows with materials for every head of prayer.

The child who, while ſhe was engaged in learning theſe Scriptures, was not aware that there was any ſpecific object in view, or any farther end to be anſwered by it, will afterwards feel an unexpected pleaſure ariſing from the application of her petty labours, when ſhe is called to draw out from her little treaſury of knowledge the ſtores ſhe has been inſenſibly collecting; and will be pleaſed to find that without any freſh application to ſtudy, for ſhe is now obliged to exerciſe a higher faculty than memory, ſhe has lying ready in her mind the materials with which ſhe is at length called upon to work. Her judgment muſt be ſet about ſelecting one, or two, or more texts which ſhall contain the ſubſtance of every ſpecific head of prayer before noticed; and it will be a farther exerciſe to her underſtanding to concatenate the detached parts into one regular whole, occaſionally varying the arrangement as ſhe likes; that is, changing the order, ſometimes beginning with invocation, ſometimes with confeſſion; ſometimes dwelling longer on one part, ſometimes

ſometimes on another. As the hardſhips of a religious Sunday are often ſo pathetically pleaded, as making one of the heavy burdens of religion; and as the friends of religion are ſo often called upon to mitigate its intolerable rigours, by recommending pleaſant employment, might not ſuch an exerciſe as has been here ſuggeſted help, by varying its occupations, to lighten its load?

The habits of the pupil being thus early formed, her memory, attention, and intellect being bent in a right direction, and the exerciſe invariably maintained, may one not reaſonably hope that her *affections* alſo, through divine grace, may become intereſted in the work, till ſhe will be enabled "to pray with the ſpirit and with "the underſtanding alſo?" She will now be qualified to uſe a well compoſed form, if neceſſary, with ſerioufneſs and advantage; for ſhe will now uſe it not mechanically, but rationally. That which before appeared to her a mere maſs of good words, will now appear a ſignificant compoſition, exhibiting variety, and regularity, and beauty; and while ſhe will have the farther advantage of being enabled by her improved judgment to diſtinguiſh and ſelect for her own purpoſe ſuch prayers as are more judicious and more ſcriptural, it will alſo habituate her to look for plan, and deſign, and lucid order, in other works.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

The practical uſe of female knowledge, with a ſketch of the female character, and a comparative view of the ſexes.

THE chief end to be propoſed in cultivating the underſtanding of women, is to qualify them for the practical purpoſes of life. Their knowledge is not often, like the learning of men, to be reproduced in ſome literary compoſition, nor ever in any learned profeſſion; but it is to come out in conduct. A lady ſtudies, not that ſhe may qualify herſelf to become an orator or a pleader; not that ſhe may learn to debate, but to act. She is to read the beſt books, not ſo much to enable her to talk of them, as to bring the improvement which they furniſh, to the rectification of her principles, and the formation of her habits. The great uſes of ſtudy are to enable her to regulate her own mind, and to be uſeful to others.

To woman, therefore, whatever be her rank, I would recommend a predominance of thoſe more ſober ſtudies, which, not having diſplay for their object, may make her wiſe without vanity, happy without witneſſes, and content with-panegyriſts; the exerciſe of which will not bring celebrity, but improve uſefulneſs. She ſhould purſue

purſue every kind of ſtudy which will teach her to elicit truth; which will lead her to be intent upon realities; will give preciſion to her ideas; will make an exact mind; every ſtudy which, inſtead of ſtimulating her ſenſibility, will chaſtiſe it; will bring the imagination under dominion; will lead her to think, to compare, to combine, to methodiſe; which will confer ſuch a power of diſcrimination, that her judgment ſhall learn to reject what is dazzling, if it be not ſolid; and to prefer, not what is ſtriking, or bright, or new, but what is juſt. That kind of knowledge which is rather fitted for home conſumption than foreign exportation, is peculiarly adapted to women.

It is becauſe the ſuperficial nature of their education furniſhes them with a falſe and low ſtandard of intellectual excellence, that women have ſomethimes become ridiculous by the unfounded pretenſions of literary vanity: for it is not the really learned, but the ſmatterers, who have generally brought their ſex into diſcredit, by an abſurd affectation, which has ſet them on deſpiſing the duties of ordinary life. There have not indeed been wanting (but the character is not now common) *precieuſes ridicules*, who, aſſuming a ſuperiority to the ſober cares which ought to occupy their ſex, have claimed a lofty and ſupercilious exemption from the dull and plodding drudgeries

Of this dim ſpeck called earth!

who have affected to eſtabliſh an unnatural ſeparation between talents and uſefulneſs, inſtead of bearing in mind that talents are the great appointed inſtruments of uſefulneſs; who have acted as if knowledge were to confer on woman a kind of fantaſtic ſovereignty, which ſhould exonerate her from female duties; whereas it is only meant the more eminently to qualify her for the performance of them. For a woman of real ſenſe will never forget, that while the greater part of her proper duties are ſuch as the moſt moderately gifted may fulfil with credit, (ſince Providence never makes that to be very difficult, which is generally neceſſary,) yet the moſt highly endowed are equally bound to fulfil them; and the humbleſt of theſe offices, performed on Chriſtian principles, are wholeſome for the minds even of the moſt enlightened, and tend to the caſting down of thoſe high imaginations which women of genius are too much tempted to indulge.

For inſtance; ladies whoſe natural vanity has been aggravated by a falſe education, may look down on *œconomy* as a vulgar attainment, unworthy of the attention of an highly cultivated intellect; but this is the falſe eſtimate of a ſhallow mind. Œconomy, ſuch as a woman of fortune is called on to practiſe, is not merely the petty detail of ſmall daily expences, the ſhabby curtailments and ſtinted parſimony of a little mind, operating on little concerns; but it is the exerciſe

exerciſe of a ſound judgment exerted in the comprehenſive outline of order, of arrangement, of diſtribution; of regulations by which alone well-governed ſocieties, great and ſmall, ſubſiſt. She who has the beſt regulated mind will, other things being equal, have the beſt regulated family. As in the ſuperintendence of the univerſe, wiſdom is ſeen in its *effects*; and as in the viſible works of Providence that which goes on with ſuch beautiful regularity is the reſult not of chance but of deſign; ſo that management which ſeems the moſt eaſy is commonly the conſequence of the beſt concerted plan: and a well-concerted plan is ſeldom the offspring of an ordinary mind. A ſound œconomy is a ſound underſtanding brought into action; it is calculation realized; it is the doctrine of proportion reduced to practice; it is foreſeeing conſequences, and guarding againſt them; it is expecting contingencies and being prepared for them. The difference is, that to a narrow-minded vulgar œconomiſt the details are continually preſent; ſhe is overwhelmed by their weight, and is perpetually beſpeaking your pity for her labours and your praiſe for her exertions, ſhe is afraid you will not ſee how much ſhe is harraſſed. Little events and trivial operations engroſs her whole ſoul; while a woman of ſenſe, having provided for their probable recurrence, guards againſt the inconveniencies, without being diſconcerted by the caſual obſtructions which they offer to her general ſcheme. Subor-

dinate expences and inconſiderable retrenchments ſhould not ſwallow up that attention which is better beſtowed on regulating the general ſcale of expence, and correcting and reducing an overgrown eſtabliſhment.

Superior talents, however, are not ſo common, as, by their frequency, to offer much diſturbance to the general courſe of human affairs; and many a lady, who tacitly accuſes herſelf of neglecting her ordinary duties becauſe ſhe is a *genius*, will perhaps be found often to accuſe herſelf as unjuſtly as good St. Jerome, when he laments that he was beaten by the angel for being too Ciceronian in his ſtyle*.

The truth is, women who are ſo puffed up with the conceit of talents as to neglect the plain duties of life, will not frequently be found to be women of the beſt abilities. And here may the author be allowed the gratification of obſerving, that thoſe women of real genius and extenſive knowledge, whoſe friendſhip have conferred honour and happineſs on her own life, have been in general eminent for œconomy and the practice of domeſtic virtues; and have riſen ſuperior to the poor affectation of neglecting the duties and deſpiſing the knowledge of common life, with which literary women have been frequently, and not always unjuſtly, accuſed.

A romantic girl with a pretenſion to ſentiment, which her ſtill more ignorant friends miſtake for genius,

* See Dr. Owen.

genius, for in the empire of the blind the one-eyed are kings, and poſſeſſing ſomething of a natural ear, has perhaps in her childhood exhauſted all the images of grief, and love, and fancy, picked up in her deſultory poetical reading, in an elegy on a ſick linnet, or a ſonnet on a dead lap-dog; ſhe begins thenceforward to be conſidered as a prodigy in her little circle; ſurrounded with flatterers, ſhe has no opportunity of learning that her fame is derived not from her powers, but her poſition; and that when an impartial critic ſhall have made all the neceſſary deductions, ſuch as—that ſhe is a neighbour, that ſhe is a relation, that ſhe is a female, that ſhe is young, that ſhe has had no advantages, that ſhe is pretty perhaps—when her verſes come to be ſtripped of all their extraneous appendages, and the fair author is driven off her 'vantage ground of partiality, ſex, and favour, ſhe will commonly ſink to the level of ordinary capacities; while thoſe more quiet women, who have meekly ſat down in the humble ſhades of proſe and prudence, by a patient perſeverance in rational ſtudies, riſe afterwards much higher in the ſcale of intellect, and acquire a ſtock of ſound knowledge for far better purpoſes than mere diſplay. And, though it may ſeem a contradiction, yet it will generally be found true, that girls who take to ſcribble are the leaſt ſtudious, the leaſt reflecting, and the leaſt rational. They early acquire a falſe confidence in their own unaſſiſted powers; it becomes

more

more gratifying to their natural vanity to be always pouring out their minds on paper, than to be drawing into them freſh ideas from their richer ſources. The original ſtock, ſmall perhaps at firſt, is ſoon ſpent; and the ſubſequent efforts grow more and more feeble, if the mind which is continually exhauſting itſelf, be not alſo continually repleniſhed; till the latter compoſitions become little more than reproductions of the ſame ideas, and fainter copies of the ſame images, a little varied and modified perhaps, and not a little diluted and enfeebled.

Theſe ſelf-taught, and ſelf-dependent ſcribblers pant for the unmerited and unattainable praiſe of fancy and of genius, while they diſdain the commendation of judgment, knowledge, and perſeverance which would probably be within their reach. To extort admiration they are accuſtomed to boaſt of an impoſſible rapidity in compoſing; and while they inſinuate how little time their performances coſt them, they intend you ſhould infer how perfect they might have made them had they condeſcended to the drudgery of application; but application with them implies defect of genius. They take ſuperfluous pains to convince you that there was neither learning nor labour employed in the work for which they ſolicit your praiſe: the judicious eye too ſoon perceives it! though it does *not* perceive that native ſtrength and mother-wit, which in works of real genius make ſome amends

for

for the negligence, which yet they do not juſtify. But inſtead of extolling theſe effuſions for their facility, it would be kind in friends rather to blame them for their crudeneſs: and when the young pretenders are eager to prove in how ſhort a time ſuch a poem has been ſtruck off, it would be well to regret that they had not either taken a longer time, or refrained from writing at all; as in the former caſe the work would have been leſs defective, and in the latter the writer would have diſcovered more humility and ſelf-diſtruſt.

A general capacity for knowledge, and the cultivation of the underſtanding at large, will always put a woman into the beſt ſtate for directing her purſuits into thoſe particular channels which her deſtination in life may afterwards require. But ſhe ſhould be carefully inſtructed that her talents are only a means to a ſtill higher attainment, and that ſhe is not to reſt in them as an end; that merely to exerciſe them as inſtruments for the acquiſition of fame and the promotion of pleaſure, is ſubverſive of her delicacy as a woman, and contrary to the ſpirit of a chriſtian.

Study, therefore, is to be conſidered as the means of ſtrengthening the mind, and of fitting it for higher duties, juſt as exerciſe is to be conſidered as an inſtrument for ſtrengthening the body for the ſame end. And the valetudinarian who is religiouſly punctual in the obſervance

vance of his daily rides to promote his health, and reſts in that as an end, without ſo much as intending to make his improved health an inſtrument of increaſed uſefulneſs, acts on the ſame low and ſelfiſh principle with her who reads merely for pleaſure and for fame, without any deſign of devoting the more enlarged and invigorated mind to the glory of the Giver.

But there is one *human* conſideration which would perhaps more effectually tend to damp in an aſpiring woman the ardours of literary vanity (I ſpeak not of real genius, though there the remark often applies) than any which ſhe will derive from motives of humility, or propriety, or religion; which is, that in the judgment paſſed on her performances, ſhe will have to encounter the mortifying circumſtance of having her ſex always taken into account, and her higheſt exertions will probably be received with the qualified approbation, *that it is really extraordinary for a woman.* Men of learning, who are naturally inclined to eſtimate works in proportion as they appear to be the reſult of art, ſtudy, and inſtitution, are inclined to conſider even the happier performances of the other ſex as the ſpontaneous productions of a fruitful but ſhallow ſoil; and to give them the ſame ſort of praiſe which we beſtow on certain ſallads, which often draw from us a ſort of wondering commendation; not indeed as being worth much in themſelves, but becauſe by the lightneſs of the

the earth, and a happy knack of the gardener, theſe indifferent creſſes ſpring up in a night, and therefore we are ready to wonder they are no worſe.

As to men of ſenſe, however, they need be the leſs inimical to the improvement of the other ſex, as they themſelves will be ſure to be gainers by it; the enlargement of the female underſtanding being the moſt likely means to put an end to thoſe petty cavils and contentions for equality which female ſmatterers ſo anxiouſly maintain. I ſay ſmatterers, for between the firſt claſs of both ſexes the queſtion is much more rarely and always more temperately agitated. Co-operation and not competition is indeed the clear principle we wiſh to ſee reciprocally adopted by thoſe higher minds in each ſex which really approximate the neareſt to each other. The more a woman's underſtanding is improved, the more obviouſly ſhe will diſcern that there can be no happineſs in any ſociety where there is a perpetual ſtruggle for power; and the more her judgment is rectified, the more accurate views will ſhe take of the ſtation ſhe was born to fill, and the more readily will ſhe accommodate herſelf to it; while the moſt vulgar and ill-informed women are ever moſt inclined to be tyrants, and thoſe always ſtruggle moſt vehemently for power, who would not fail to make the worſt uſe of it when attained. Thus the weakeſt reaſoners

are always the moſt poſitive in debate; and the cauſe is obvious, for *they* are unavoidably driven to maintain their pretenſions by violence who want arguments and reaſons to prove that they are in the right.

There is this ſingular difference between a woman vain of her wit, and a woman vain of her beauty; that the beauty, while ſhe is anxiouſly alive to her own fame, is often indifferent enough about the beauty of other women; and provided ſhe herſelf is ſure of your admiration, ſhe does not inſiſt on your thinking that there is another handſome woman in the world: while ſhe who is vain of her genius, more liberal at leaſt in her vanity, is jealous for the honour of her whole ſex, and contends for the equality of their pretenſions, in which ſhe feels that her own are involved. The beauty vindicates her own rights, the wit, the rights of women; the beauty fights for herſelf, the wit for a party; and while the more ſelfiſh though more moderate beauty

would but be Queen for life,

the public ſpirited wit ſtruggles to abrogate the Salique law of intellect, and to enthrone

a whole ſex of Queens.

At the revival of letters in the ſixteenth and the following century, the controverſy about this equality was agitated with more warmth than

than wiſdom; and the proceſs was inſtituted and carried on, on the part of the female complainant, with that ſort of acrimony which always raiſes a ſuſpicion of the juſtice of any cauſe. The novelty of that knowledge which was then burſting out from the dawn of a long dark night, kindled all the ardours of the female mind, and the ladies fought zealouſly for a portion of that renown which the reputation of learning was beginning to beſtow. Beſides their own pens, they had for their advocates all thoſe needy authors who had any thing to hope from their power, their riches, or their influence; and ſo giddy did ſome of theſe literary ladies become by the adulation of their numerous panegyriſts, that through theſe repeated draughts of inebriating praiſe, they grew to deſpiſe the equality for which they had before contended, as a ſtate below their merit and unworthy of their acceptance. They now ſcorned to litigate for what they already thought they ſo obviouſly poſſeſſed, and nothing ſhort of the palm of ſuperiority was at length conſidered as adequate to their growing claims. When court-ladies and princeſſes were the candidates, they could not long want champions to ſupport their cauſe; by theſe champions female authorities were produced as if paramount to facts; quotations from theſe female authors were conſidered as proofs, and their point-blank aſſertions ſtood for ſolid and irrefragable arguments.

In

In thoſe paraſites who offered this homage to female genius, the homage was therefore the effect neither of truth, nor of juſtice, nor of conviction. It aroſe rather out of gratitude, or it was a reciprocation of flattery; it was ſometimes vanity, it was often diſtreſs, which prompted the adulation; it was the want of a patroneſs; it was the want of a dinner. When a lady, and eſpecially as it then often happened, when one who was noble or royal, ſat with gratifying docility at the foot of a profeſſor's chair; when ſhe admired the philoſopher, or took upon her to protect the theologian, whom his rivals among his own ſex were tearing to pieces, what could the grateful profeſſor or delighted theologian do leſs in return than make the apotheoſis of her who had had the penetration to diſcern his merit and the ſpirit to reward it? Thus in fact it was not ſo much *her* vanity as his own that he was often flattering, though ſhe was the dupe of her more deep and deſigning panegyriſt.

But it is a little unlucky for the perpetuity of that fame which the encomiaſt had made over to his patroneſs, in the never dying records of his verſes and orations, that in the revolution of a century or two the very names of the flattered are now almoſt as little known as the works of the flatterers. *Their memorial is periſhed with them* *: an inſtructive leſſon, that whoever

* See Brantome, Pere le Moine, Monſ. Thomas, &c.

whoever beſtows or aſſumes a reputation diſproportioned to the merit of the claimant, will find it as little durable as ſolid. For this literary warfare which engaged ſuch troops of the ſecond-hand authors of the age in queſtion in ſuch continual ſkirmiſhes, and not a few pitched battles; which provoked ſo much rancour, ſo many volumes, and ſo little wit; ſo much vanity and ſo much flattery, produced no uſeful or laſting effect. Thoſe who promiſed themſelves that their names would outlive "one "half of round eternity," did not reach the end of the century in which the boaſt was made; and thoſe who offered the incenſe, and thoſe who greedily ſnuffed up its fumes, are buried in the ſame blank oblivion!

But when the temple of Janus ſeemed to have been cloſed, or when at worſt the peace was only occaſionally broken by a ſlight and random ſhot from the hand of ſome ſingle ſtraggler; it appears that though open rebellion had ceaſed, yet the female claim had not been renounced; it had only (if we may change the metaphor) lain in abeyance. The conteſt has recently been revived with added fury, and with multiplied exactions; for whereas the ancient demand was merely a kind of imaginary prerogative, a ſpeculative importance, a mere titular right, a ſhadowy claim to a few unreal acres of Parnaſſian territory; the revived contention has taken a more ſerious turn, and

and brings forward political as well as intellectual pretenſions; and among the innovations of this innovating period, the impoſing term of *rights* has been produced to ſanctify the claim of our female pretenders, with a view not only to rekindle in the minds of women a preſumptuous vanity diſhonourable to their ſex, but produced with a view to excite in their hearts an impious diſcontent with the poſt which God has aſſigned them in this world.

But *they* little underſtand the true intereſts of woman who would lift her from the important duties of her allotted ſtation, to fill with fantaſtic dignity a loftier but leſs appropriate niche. Nor do they underſtand her true happineſs, who ſeek to annihilate diſtinctions from which ſhe derives advantages, and to attempt innovations which would depreciate her real value. Each ſex has its proper excellencies, which would be loſt were they melted down into the common character by the fuſion of the new philoſophy. Why ſhould we do away diſtinctions which increaſe the mutual benefits and enhance the ſatisfactions of life? Whence, but by carefully preſerving the original marks of difference ſtamped by the hand of the Creator, would be derived the ſuperior advantage of mixed ſociety? Have men no need to have their rough angles filed off, and their harſhneſſes and aſperities ſmoothed and poliſhed by aſſimilating with beings of more ſoftneſs and refinement?

Are

Are the ideas of women naturally ſo *very* judicious, are their principles ſo *invincibly* firm, are their views ſo *perfectly* correct, are their judgments ſo *completely* exact, that there is occaſion for no additional weight, no ſuperadded ſtrength, no increaſed clearneſs, none of that enlargement of mind, none of that additional invigoration which may be derived from the aids of the ſtronger ſex? What identity could advantageouſly ſuperſede an enlivening oppoſition and intereſting variety of character? Is it not then more wiſe as well as more honourable to move contentedly in the plain path which Providence has obviouſly marked out to the ſex, and in which cuſtom has for the moſt part rationally confirmed them, than to ſtray awkwardly, unbecomingly, and unſucceſsfully, in a forbidden road? Is it not deſirable to be the lawful poſſeſſors of a leſſer domeſtic territory, rather than the turbulent uſurpers of a wider foreign empire? to be good originals, than bad imitators? to be the beſt thing of one's own kind, rather than an inferior thing even if it were of an higher kind? to be excellent women rather than indifferent men?

Is the author then undervaluing her own ſex? —No. It is her zeal for their true *intereſts* which leads her to oppoſe their imaginary *rights*. It is her regard for their happineſs which makes her endeavour to cure them of a feveriſh thirſt for fame; of an ambition as little becoming the

the delicacy of their female character as the meekneſs of their religious profeſſion. A little Chriſtian humility and ſober-mindedneſs are worth all the wild metaphyſical diſcuſſion which has unſettled the peace of vain women, and forfeited the reſpect of reaſonable men. And the moſt elaborate definition of ideal rights, and the moſt hardy meaſures for attaining them, are of leſs value in the eyes of a truly amiable woman, than "that meek and quiet ſpirit, which "is in the ſight of God of great price."

Natural propenſities beſt mark the deſignations of Providence as to their application. The fin was not more clearly beſtowed on the fiſh that he ſhould ſwim, nor the wing given to the bird that he ſhould fly, than ſuperior ſtrength of body, and a firmer texture of mind was given to man, that he might preſide in the deep and daring ſcenes of action and of council; in government, in arms, in ſcience, in commerce, and in thoſe profeſſions which demand a higher reach, and a wider range of powers. The true value of woman is not diminiſhed by the imputation of inferiority in *thoſe* reſpects in which her claim to excellence does not conſiſt. She has other requiſites better adapted to anſwer the end and purpoſes of her being, by "HIM who does all things well;" who ſuits the agent to the action; who accommodates the inſtrument to the work.

Let

Let not then aſpiring woman view with pining envy the keen ſatyriſt, hunting vice through all the doublings and windings of the heart; the ſagacious politician, leading ſenates, and directing the fate of empires; the acute lawyer, detecting the obliquities of fraud; and the ſkilful dramatiſt, expoſing the pretenſions of folly: but let her ambition be conſoled by reflecting, that thoſe who thus excel, to all that Nature beſtows and books can teach, muſt add beſides that conſummate knowledge of the world to which a delicate woman has no fair avenues, and which even if ſhe could attain, ſhe would never be ſuppoſed to have come honeſtly by.

In almoſt all that comes under the deſcription of polite letters, in all that captivates by imagery, or warms by juſt and affecting ſentiment, women are excellent. They poſſeſs in a high degree that delicacy and quickneſs of perception, and that nice diſcernment between the beautiful and defective which comes under the denomination of taſte. Both in compoſition and action they excel in details; but they do not ſo much generaliſe their ideas as men, nor do their minds ſeize a great ſubject with ſo large a graſp. They are acute obſervers, and accurate judges of life and manners, as far as their own ſphere of obſervation extends; but they deſcribe a ſmaller circle. A woman ſees the world, as it were, from a little elevation in her

her own garden, whence ſhe makes an exact ſurvey of home ſcenes, but takes not in that wider range of diſtant proſpects which he who ſtands on a loftier eminence commands. Women have a certain *tact* which often enables them to feel what is juſt more inſtantaneouſly than they can define it. They have an intuitive penetration into character, beſtowed on them by Providence, like the ſenſitive and tender organs of ſome timid animals, as a kind of natural guard to warn of the approach of danger beings who are often called to act defenſively.

In ſumming up the evidence, if I may ſo ſpeak, of the different capacities of the ſexes, one may venture, perhaps, to aſſert, that women have equal *parts*, but are inferior in *wholeneſs* of mind, in the integral underſtanding: that though a ſuperior woman may poſſeſs ſingle faculties in equal perfection, yet there is commonly a juſter proportion in the mind of a ſuperior man: that if women have in an equal degree the faculty of fancy which creates images, and the faculty of memory which collects and ſtores ideas, they ſeem not to poſſeſs in equal meaſure the faculty of comparing, combining, analyſing, and ſeparating theſe ideas; that deep and patient thinking which goes to the bottom of a ſubject; nor that power of arrangement which knows how to link a thouſand connected ideas in one dependent train, without loſing ſight of the original idea

out

out of which the reſt grow, and on which they all hang. The female too, wanting ſteadineſs in her intellectual purſuits, is perpetually turned aſide by her characteriſtic taſtes and feelings. Woman in the career of genius, is the Atalanta, who will riſk loſing the race by running out of her road to pick up the golden apple; while her male competitor, without, perhaps, poſſeſſing greater natural ſtrength or ſwiftneſs, will more certainly attain his object, by direct purſuit, by being leſs expoſed to the ſeductions of extraneous beauty, and will win the race, not by excelling in ſpeed, but by deſpiſing the bait *.

Here it may be juſtly enough retorted, that, as it is allowed the education of women is ſo defective, the alleged inferiority of their minds may be accounted for on that ground more juſtly than by aſcribing it to their natural make. And, indeed, there is ſo much truth in the remark, that till women ſhall be more reaſonably educated, and till the native growth of their mind ſhall ceaſe to be ſtinted and cramped, we have no juſter ground for pronouncing that their underſtanding has already reached its higheſt attainable

* What indiſpoſes even reaſonable women to concede in theſe points is, that the weakeſt man inſtantly lays hold on the conceſſion; and, on the mere ground of ſex, plumes himſelf on his own individual ſuperiority; inferring that the ſillieſt man is ſuperior to the firſt-rate woman.

tainable point, than the Chineſe would have for affirming that their women have attained to the greateſt poſſible perfection in walking, while the firſt care is, during their infancy to cripple their feet. At leaſt, till the female ſex are more carefully inſtructed, this queſtion will always remain as undecided as to the *degree* of difference between the maſculine and feminine underſtanding, as the queſtion between the underſtandings of blacks and whites: for until Africans and Europeans are put more nearly on a par in the cultivation of their minds, the ſhades of diſtinction, if any there be, between their native abilities can never be fairly aſcertained.

And when we ſee (and who will deny that we ſee it frequently?) ſo many women nobly riſing from under all the preſſure of a diſadvantageous education and a defective ſyſtem of ſociety, and exhibiting the moſt unambiguous marks of a vigorous underſtanding, a correct judgment, and a ſterling piety, it reminds one of thoſe ſhining lights which have now and then burſt out through all the "darkneſs viſible" of the Romiſh church, have diſincumbered themſelves from the gloom of ignorance, ſhaken off the fetters of prejudice, and with a noble energy riſen ſuperior to all the errors of a corrupt theology.

But whatever characteriſtical diſtinctions may exiſt; whatever inferiority may be attached to woman

woman from the ſlighter frame of her body, or the more circumſcribed powers of her mind; from a leſs ſyſtematic education, and from the ſubordinate ſtation ſhe is called to fill in life; there is one great and leading circumſtance which raiſes her importance, and even eſtabliſhes her equality. *Chriſtianity* has exalted women to true and undiſputed dignity; in Chriſt Jeſus, as there is neither "rich nor poor," "bond nor free," ſo there is neither "male "nor female." In the view of that immortality, which is brought to light by the goſpel, ſhe has no ſuperior. Women (to borrow the idea of an excellent prelate) make up one half of the human race; equally with men redeemed by the blood of Chriſt. In this their true dignity conſiſts; here their beſt pretenſions reſt, here their higheſt claims are allowed.

All diſputes then for pre-eminence between the ſexes have only for their object the poor precedence for a few ſhort years, the attention of which would be better devoted to the duties of life and the intereſts of eternity.

And as the final hope of the female ſex is equal, ſo are their preſent means, perhaps more favourable, and their opportunities, often, leſs obſtructed than thoſe of the other ſex. In their Chriſtian courſe women have every ſuperior advantage, whether we conſider the natural make of their minds, their leiſure for acquiſition

quiſition in youth, or their ſubſequently leſs expoſed mode of life. Their hearts are naturally ſoft and flexible, open to impreſſions of love and gratitude; their feelings tender and lively; all theſe are favourable to the cultivation of a devotional ſpirit. Yet while we remind them of theſe native benefits, they will do well to be on their guard leſt this very ſoftneſs and ductility lay them more open to the ſeductions of temptation and error.

They have in the native conſtitution of their minds, as well as from the relative ſituations they are called to fill, a certain ſenſe of attachment and dependence, which is peculiarly favourable to religion. They feel, perhaps, more immediately the want of a ſtrength which is not their own. Chriſtianity brings that ſuperinduced ſtrength; it comes in aid of their conſcious weakneſs, and offers the only true counterpoiſe to it. "Woman, be thou healed of "thine infirmity," is ſtill the heart-cheering language of a gracious Saviour.

Women alſo bring to the ſtudy of Chriſtianity fewer of thoſe prejudices which perſons of the other ſex too often early contract. Men, from their claſſical education, acquire a ſtrong partiality for the manners of Pagan antiquity, and the documents of Pagan philoſophy: this, together with the impure taint caught from the looſe deſcriptions of their poets, and the licentious

tious language even of their hiſtorians, (in whom we reaſonably look for more gravity,) often weakens the good impreſſions of young men, and at leaſt confuſes their ideas of piety, by mixing them with ſo much heterogeneous matter. Their very ſpirits are imbued all the week with the impure follies of a depraved mythology; and it is well if even on Sundays they get to hear of the "true God, and Jeſus Chriſt "whom he has ſent." While women, though ſtruggling with the ſame natural corruptions, have commonly leſs knowledge to unknow, and fewer ſchemes to unlearn; they have not to ſhake off the pride of ſyſtem, and to diſencumber their minds from the ſhackles of favourite theories: they do not bring from the Porch or the Academy any "oppoſitions of ſcience" to obſtruct their reception of thoſe pure doctrines taught on the Mount: doctrines which ought to find a readier entrance into minds uninfected with the pride of the ſchool of Zeno, or the libertiniſm of that of Epicurus.

And as women are naturally more affectionate than faſtidious; they are likely both to read and to hear with a leſs critical ſpirit than men: they will not be on the watch to detect errors, ſo much as to gather improvement; they have ſeldom that hardneſs which is acquired by dealing deeply in books of controverſy, but are more inclined to works which quicken the devotional feelings, than to ſuch as awaken a ſpirit of doubt and

and ſcepticiſm. They are leſs diſpoſed to conſider the compoſitions they peruſe, as materials on which to ground objections and anſwers, than as helps to faith and rules of life. With theſe advantages, however, they ſhould alſo bear in mind that their eaſily received impreſſions being often leſs abiding, and their reaſon leſs open to conviction by means of the ſtrong evidences which exiſt in favour of the truth of Chriſtianity, "they ought, therefore, to give the more earneſt heed to the things which they have heard, "leſt at any time they ſhould let them ſlip." Women are alſo, from their domeſtic habits, in poſſeſſion of more leiſure and tranquillity for religious purſuits, as well as ſecured from thoſe difficulties and ſtrong temptations to which men are expoſed in the tumult of a buſtling world. Their lives are more regular and uniform, leſs agitated by the paſſions, the buſineſſes, the contentions, the ſhock of opinions and of intereſts which divide ſociety and convulſe the world.

If we have denied them the poſſeſſion of talents which might lead them to excel as lawyers, they are preſerved from the peril of having their principles warped by that too indiſcriminate defence of right and wrong, to which the profeſſors of the law are expoſed. If we ſhould queſtion their title to eminence as mathematicians, they are happily exempt from the danger to which men devoted to that ſcience are ſaid to be liable; namely, that of looking for demonſtration on

ſubjects,

ſubjects, which, by their very nature, are incapable of affording it. If they are leſs converſant in the powers of nature, the ſtructure of the human frame, and the knowledge of the heavenly bodies, than philoſophers, phyſicians, and aſtronomers; they are, however, delivered from the error into which many of each of theſe have ſometimes fallen, I mean from the fatal habit of reſting in ſecond cauſes, inſtead of referring all to the firſt; inſtead of making "the "heavens declare the glory of God, and pro- "claim his handy work;" inſtead of concluding, when they obſerve "how fearfully and "wonderfully we are made, marvellous are thy "works O Lord, and that my ſoul knoweth "right well."

And let the weaker ſex take comfort, that in their very exemption from privileges, which they are ſometimes fooliſhly diſpoſed to envy, conſiſts not only their ſecurity, but their happineſs. If they enjoy not the diſtinctions of public life and high offices, do they not eſcape the reſponſibility attached to them, and the mortification of being diſmiſſed from them? If they have no voice in deliberative aſſemblies, do they not avoid the load of duty inſeparably connected with ſuch privileges? Prepoſterous pains have been taken to excite in women an uneaſy jealouſy, that their talents are neither rewarded with public honours nor emoluments in life; nor with inſcriptions, ſtatues, and mauſoleums after death. It has

been abſurdly repreſented to them as a hardſhip, that while they are expected to perform duties, they muſt yet be contented to relinquiſh honours, and muſt unjuſtly be compelled to renounce fame while they muſt ſedulouſly labour to deſerve it.

But for Chriſtian women to act on the low views ſuggeſted to them by their ill-judging panegyriſts; and to look up with a giddy head and a throbbing heart to honours and remunerations, ſo little ſuited to the wants and capacities of an immortal ſpirit, would be no leſs ridiculous than if Chriſtian heroes ſhould look back with envy on the pagan rewards of ovations, oak garlands, parſley crowns, and laurel wreaths. The Chriſtian hope more than reconciles Chriſtian women to theſe petty privations, by ſubſtituting a nobler prize for their ambition, "the prize of the high "calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus;" by ſubſtituting, for that popular and fluctuating voice, which may cry, "Hoſanna" and "crucify" in a breath, that "favour of God which is eternal life."

If women ſhould lament it as a diſadvantage attached to their ſex, that their character is of ſo delicate a texture as to be ſullied by the ſlighteſt breath of calumny, and that the ſtain once received is indelible; yet are they not led by that very circumſtance as if inſtinctively to ſhrink from all thoſe irregularities to which the loſs of character is ſo certainly expected to be attached; and to ſhun with keener circumſpection the moſt diſtant

diſtant approach towards the confines of danger? Let them not lament it as a hardſhip, but account it to be a privilege, that the delicacy of their ſex impels them more ſcrupulouſly to avoid the very appearance of evil; let them not regret that the conſciouſneſs of their danger ſerves to ſecure their purity, by placing them at a greater diſtance, and in a more deep intrenchment from the evil itſelf.

Though it be one main object of this little work, rather to lower than to raiſe any deſire of celebrity in the female heart; yet I would awaken it to a juſt ſenſibility to honeſt fame: I would call on women to reflect that our religion has not only made them heirs to a bleſſed immortality hereafter, but has greatly raiſed them in the ſcale of being here, by lifting them to an importance in ſociety unknown to the moſt poliſhed ages of antiquity. The religion of Chriſt has even beſtowed a degree of renown on the ſex beyond what any other religion ever did. Perhaps there are hardly ſo many virtuous women (for I reject the long catalogue whom their vices have transferred from oblivion to infamy) named in all the pages of Greek or Roman Hiſtory, as are handed down to eternal fame, in a few of thoſe ſhort chapters with which the great Apoſtle to the Gentiles has concluded his epiſtles to his converts. Of "devout and honourable women," the ſacred ſcriptures record "not a few." Some of the moſt affecting ſcenes, the moſt intereſting

tranſactions, and the moſt touching converſations which are recorded of the Saviour of the world, paſſed with women. *They* are the firſt remarked as having "miniſtered to him of their ſubſtance." *Theirs* was the praiſe of not abandoning their deſpiſed Redeemer when he was led to execution, and under all the hopeleſs circumſtances of his ignominious death; *they* appear to have been the *laſt* attending at his tomb, and the *firſt* on the morning when he aroſe from it. *Theirs* was the privilege of receiving the earlieſt conſolation from their riſen Lord; *theirs* was the honour of being firſt commiſſioned to announce his glorious reſurrection to the world. And even to furniſh heroic confeſſors, devoted ſaints, and unſhrinking martyrs to the Church of Chriſt, has not been the excluſive honour of the bolder ſex.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONVERSATION.—*Hints ſuggeſted on the ſubject.—On the tempers and diſpoſitions to be introduced in it.—Errors to be avoided.—Vanity under various ſhapes the cauſe of thoſe errors.*

THE ſexes will naturally deſire to appear to each other, ſuch as each believes the other will beſt like; their converſation will act reciprocally; and each ſex will appear more or leſs rational as they perceive it will more or leſs recommend them to the other. It is therefore to be regretted, that many men, even of diſtintinguiſhed ſenſe and learning, are ſo apt to conſider the ſociety of ladies, as a ſcene in which they are rather to reſt their underſtandings, than to exerciſe them; while ladies, in return, are too much addicted to making their court by lending themſelves to this ſpirit of trifling; they often avoid making uſe of what abilities they have; and affect to talk below their natural and acquired powers of mind; conſidering it as a tacit and welcome flattery to the underſtanding of men, to renounce the exerciſe of their own.

Now

Now ſince taſte and principles thus mutually operate; men, by keeping up converſation to its proper ſtandard, would not only call into exerciſe the powers of mind which women actually poſſeſs; but would even awaken in them new energies which they do not know they poſſeſs; and men of ſenſe would find their account in doing this, for their own talents would be more highly rated by companions who were better able to appreciate them. And, on the other hand, if young women found it did not often recommend them in the eyes of thoſe whom they might wiſh to pleaſe, to be frivolous and ſuperficial, they would become more ſedulous in correcting their own habits. Whenever faſhionable women indicate a reliſh for inſtructive converſation, men will not be apt to hazard what is vain, or unprofitable; much leſs will they ever preſume to bring forward what is looſe or corrupt, where ſome ſignal has not been previouſly given, that it will be acceptable, or at leaſt that it will be pardoned.

Ladies commonly bring into company minds already too much relaxed by petty purſuits, rather than overſtrained by intenſe application. The littleneſs of the employments in which they are uſually engaged, does not ſo exhauſt their ſpirits as to make them ſtand in need of that relaxation from company which ſevere application or overwhelming buſineſs makes requiſite for ſtudious or public men. The due conſideration

of

of this circumſtance might ſerve to bring the ſexes more nearly on a level in ſociety; and each might meet the other half way; for that degree of lively and eaſy converſation which is a neceſſary refreſhment to the learned and the buſy, would not decreaſe in pleaſantneſs by being made of ſo rational a caſt as would yet ſomewhat raiſe the minds of women, who commonly ſeek ſociety as a ſcene of pleaſure, not as a refuge from intenſe thought or exhauſting labour.

It is a diſadvantage even to thoſe women who keep the beſt company, that it is unhappily almoſt eſtabliſhed into a ſyſtem, by the other ſex, to poſtpone every thing like inſtructive diſcourſe till the ladies are withdrawn; their retreat ſerving as a kind of ſignal for the exerciſe of intellect. And in the few caſes in which it happens that any important diſcuſſion takes place in their preſence, they are for the moſt part conſidered as having little intereſt in ſerious ſubjects. Strong truths, whenever ſuch happen to be addreſſed to them, are either diluted with flattery, or kept back in part, or ſoftened to their taſte; or if the ladies expreſs a wiſh for information on any point, they are put off with a compliment, inſtead of a reaſon. They are reminded of their beauty when they are ſeeking to inform their underſtanding, and are conſidered as beings who are not expected to ſee and to judge of things as they really exiſt.

Do

Do we then wiſh to ſee the ladies, whoſe want of opportunities leaves them ſo incompetent on many points, and the modeſty of whoſe ſex ought never to allow them even to be as ſhining as they are able:—do we wiſh to ſee them take the lead in metaphyſical diſquiſitions? Do we wiſh them to plunge into the depths of theological polemics,

And find no end, in wand'ring mazes loſt?

Do we wiſh them to revive the animoſities of the Bangorian controverſy, or to decide the proceſs between the Jeſuits and the five propoſitions of Janſenius? Do we wiſh to enthrone them in the profeſſor's chair, to deliver oracles, harangues, and diſſertations? to weigh the merits of every new production in the ſcales of Quintilian, or to regulate the unities of dramatic compoſition *by Ariſtotle's clock?* Or renouncing thoſe foreign aids, do we deſire to behold them vain of a native independence of ſoul, inflated with their original powers, labouring to ſtrike out ſparks of wit, with a reſtleſs anxiety to ſhine, which generally fails, and with an anxious affectation to pleaſe, which never pleaſes?

Diſeurs de bons mots, fades caracteres!

All this be far from them!—But we *do* wiſh to ſee the converſation of well-bred women reſcued from vapid common places, from unintereſting

reſting tattle, from trite and hackneyed communications, from frivolous earneſtneſs, from falſe ſenſibility, from a warm intereſt about things of no moment, and an indifference to topics the moſt important; from a cold vanity, from the ill concealed overflowings of ſelf-love, exhibiting itſelf under the ſmiling maſk of an engaging flattery, and from all the factitious manners of artificial intercourſe. We *do* wiſh to ſee the time paſſed in poliſhed and intelligent ſociety, conſidered among the beneficial, as well as the pleaſant portions of our exiſtence, and not conſigned over, as it too frequently is, to premeditated trifling, to empty dulneſs, to unmeaning levity, or ſyſtematic unprofitableneſs. Let me not, however, be miſunderſtood: it is not meant to preſcribe that ladies ſhould affect to talk on lofty ſubjects, ſo much as to ſuggeſt that they ſhould bring good ſenſe, ſimplicity, preciſion, and truth, into thoſe common ſubjects, of which, after all, both the buſineſs and the converſation of mankind muſt be in a great meaſure made up.

It is too well known how much the dread of imputed pedantry keeps off every thing that verges towards *learned*, and the terror of imputed enthuſiaſm frightens away any thing that approaches to *ſerious* converſation; ſo that the two topics which peculiarly diſtinguiſh us, as rational and immortal beings, are by general conſent in a good degree baniſhed from the ſociety of rational and immortal creatures. But we might almoſt as

conſiſtently give up the comforts of fire becauſe a few perſons have been burnt, and the benefit of water becauſe ſome others have been drowned, as relinquiſh the enjoyments of intellectual, and the bleſſings of religious intercourſe, becauſe the learned world has ſometimes been infeſted with pedants, and the religious world with fanatics.

As in the momentous times in which we live it is next to impoſſible to paſs an evening in company but the talk will ſo inevitably revert to politics, that, without any premeditated deſign, every one preſent ſhall infallibly be able to find out to which ſide the other inclines; why, in the far higher concern of eternal things, ſhould we ſo carefully ſhun every offered opportunity of bearing even a caſual teſtimony to the part we eſpouſe in religion? Why, while we make it a ſort of point of conſcience to leave no doubt on the mind of a ſtranger, whether we adopt the party of Pitt or Fox, ſhall we chuſe to leave it very problematical whether we belong to God or Baal? Why, in religion, as well as in politics, ſhould we not act like people who, having their all at ſtake, cannot forbear now and then adverting for a moment to the object of their grand concern, and dropping, at leaſt, an incidental intimation of the ſide to which they belong?

Even the news of the day, in ſuch an eventful period as the preſent, may lend frequent occaſions to a woman of principle to declare, without

out parade, her faith in a moral Governor of the world; her truſt in a particular Providence; her belief in the Divine Omnipotence; her confidence in the power of God, in educing good from evil, in his employing wicked nations, not as favourites but inſtruments; her perſuaſion that preſent ſucceſs is no proof of the divine favour; in ſhort, ſome intimation that ſhe is not aſhamed to declare that her mind is under the influence of chriſtian faith and principle. A general concurrence in habitually exhibiting this ſpirit of decided faith and holy truſt, would inconceivably diſcourage that pert and wakeful infidelity which is ever on the watch to produce itſelf: and, as we have already obſerved, if women, who derive authority from their rank or talents, did but reflect how their ſentiments are repeated, and how their authority quoted, they would be ſo on their guard, that general ſociety might become a ſcene of profitable communication and general improvement, and the young, who are looking for models on which to faſhion themſelves, would become aſhamed and afraid of exhibiting any thing like levity, or ſcepticiſm, or profaneneſs.

Let it be underſtood, that it is not meant to intimate that ſerious ſubjects ſhould make up the bulk of converſation; this, as it is impoſſible, would alſo often be improper. It is not intended to ſuggeſt that they ſhould be abruptly introduced, or unſuitably prolonged; but only that they

they ſhould not be ſyſtematically ſhunned, nor the brand of fanaticiſm be fixed on the perſon who, with whatever propriety, hazards the introduction of ſuch ſubjects. It is evident, however, that this general dread of ſerious topics ariſes a good deal from an ignorance of the true nature of chriſtianity; people avoid it on the principle expreſſed by the vulgar phraſe of the danger of playing with edge tools. They conceive of religion as ſomething which involves controverſy, and diſpute, and miſchief; ſomething of an inflammatory nature, which is to ſtir up ill humours and hatred; as of a ſort of party-buſineſs which ſets friends at variance. So much is this notion adopted, that I have ſeen announced two works of conſiderable merit, in which it was ſtipulated as an attraction, that the ſubject of religion, as being likely to excite anger and party-diſtinctions, ſhould be carefully excluded. Such is the worldly idea of the ſpirit of that religion, whoſe direct object it was to bring "peace and good will to men!"

Women too little live or converſe up to the ſtandard of their underſtandings; and however we have deprecated affectation or pedantry, let it be remembered, that both in reading and converſing, the underſtanding gains more by ſtretching than ſtooping. If by exerting itſelf it may not attain to all it deſires, yet it will be ſure to gain ſomething. The mind, by always applying itſelf to objects below its level, contracts its dimenſions

menſions, and ſhrinks itſelf to the ſize, and lowers itſelf to the level, of the object about which it is converſant: while the underſtanding which is active and aſpiring, expands and raiſes itſelf, grows larger by exerciſe, abler by diffuſion, and richer by communication.

But the taſte of general ſociety is not favourable to improvement. The ſerioufneſs with which the moſt frivolous ſubjects are agitated, and the levity with which the moſt ſerious are diſpatched, bear a pretty exact proportion to each other. Society too is a ſort of magic lanthorn; the ſcene is perpetually ſhifting. In this inceſſant change we muſt

Catch, e'er ſhe fall, the Cynthia of the minute;—

and the faſhion of the preſent minute, evaneſcent probably like its rapid precurſors, while in many it leads to the cultivation of real knowledge, has alſo not unfrequently led even the gay and idle to the affectation of mixing a ſprinkling of ſcience with the maſs of diſſipation. The ambition of appearing to be well-informed breaks out even in thoſe triflers who will not ſpare time from their pleaſurable purſuits ſufficient for acquiring that knowledge, of which, however, the reputation is ſo deſirable. A little ſmattering of philoſophy often dignifies the purſuits of their day, without reſcuing them from the vanities of the night. A courſe of lectures (that admirable aſſiſtant for enlightening the underſtanding)

ſtanding) is not ſeldom reſorted to as a means to ſubſtitute the appearance of knowledge for the fatigue of application; but where this valuable help is attended merely like any other public exhibition, as a faſhionable purſuit, and is not furthered by correſpondent reading at home, it often ſerves to ſet off the reality of ignorance with the affectation of ſkill. But inſtead of producing in converſation a few reigning ſcientific terms, with a familiarity and readineſs, which

Amaze the unlearn'd, and make the learned ſmile,

would it not be more modeſt even for thoſe who are better informed, to avoid the common uſe of technical terms whenever the idea can be as well conveyed without them? For it argues no real ability to know the *names* of tools; the ability lies in knowing their *uſe*: and while it is in the thing, and not in the term, that real knowledge conſiſts, the charge of pedantry is attached to the uſe of the term, which would not attach to the knowledge of the ſcience.

In the faculty of ſpeaking well, ladies have ſuch a happy promptitude of turning their ſlender advantages to account, that there are many who, though they have never been taught a rule of ſyntax, yet, by a quick facility in profiting from the beſt books and the beſt company, hardly ever violate one; and who often exhibit an elegant and perſpicuous arrangement of ſtyle, without having ſtudied any of the laws of compoſi-

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tion. Every kind of knowledge which appears to be the reſult of obſervation, reflection, and natural taſte, ſits gracefully on women. Yet on the other hand it ſometimes happens, that ladies of no contemptible natural parts are too ready to produce, not only pedantic expreſſions, but crude and unfounded notions; and ſtill oftener to bring forward obvious and hackneyed remarks, which float on the very ſurface of a ſubject, with the impoſing air of recent invention, and all the vanity of conſcious diſcovery. This is becauſe their acquirements have not been worked into their minds by early inſtruction; what knowledge they have gotten ſtands out as it were above the very ſurface of their minds, like the *appliquée* of the embroiderer, inſtead of having been interwoven with the growth of the piece, ſo as to have become a part of the ſtuff. They did not, like men, acquire what they know while the texture was forming. Perhaps no better preventive could be deviſed for this literary vanity, than *early* inſtruction: that woman would be leſs likely to be vain of her knowledge who did not remember the time when ſhe was ignorant. Knowledge that is *burnt in*, if I may ſo ſpeak, is ſeldom obtruſive, rarely impertinent.

Their reading alſo has probably conſiſted much in abridgments from larger works, as was obſerved in a former chapter; this makes a readier talker, but a ſhallower thinker, than the peruſal of books of more bulk. By theſe ſcanty ſketches,

ſketches, their critical ſpirit has been excited, while their critical powers have not been formed; for in thoſe crippled mutilations they have ſeen nothing of that juſt proportion of parts, that ſkilful arrangement of the plan, and that artful diſtribution of the ſubject, which, while they prove the maſter hand of the writer, ſerve alſo to form the taſte of the reader, far more than a disjointed ſkeleton, or a beautiful feature or two, can do. The inſtruction of women is alſo too much drawn from the ſcanty and penurious ſources of ſhort writings of the eſſay kind: this, when it compriſes the beſt part of a perſon's reading, makes a ſmatterer and ſpoils a ſcholar; for though it ſupplies current talk, yet it does not make a full mind; it does not furniſh a ſtore-houſe of materials to ſtock the underſtanding, neither does it accuſtom the mind to any trains of reflection: for the ſubjects, beſides being each ſuccinctly, and, on account of this brevity, ſuperficially treated, are diſtinct and diſconnected: they ariſe out of no concatenation of ideas, nor any dependent ſeries of deduction. Yet on this pleaſant but deſultory reading, the mind which has not been trained to ſeverer exerciſe, loves to repoſe itſelf in a ſort of creditable indolence, inſtead of ſtretching its energies in the wholeſome labour of conſecutive inveſtigation*.

I am

* The writer cannot be ſuppoſed deſirous of depreciating the value of thoſe many beautiful periodical eſſays

I am not diſcouraging ſtudy at a late period of life, or even cenſuring ſlender knowledge; information is good at whatever period and in whatever degree it be acquired. But in ſuch caſes it ſhould be attended with peculiar humility: and the new poſſeſſor ſhould bear in mind, that what is freſh to her has been long known to others; and ſhe ſhould therefore be aware of advancing as novel that which is common, and obtruding as rare that which every body poſſeſſes. Some ladies are eager to exhibit proofs of their reading, though at the expence of their judgment, and will introduce in converſation quotations quite irrelevant to the matter in hand, becauſe they happen at the inſtant to recur to their recollection, or were, perhaps, found in the book they have juſt been reading. Unappropriate quotations or ſtrained analogy may ſhew reading, but they do not ſhew taſte. That juſt and happy alluſion which knows by a word how to awaken a correſponding image, or to excite in the hearer the idea which fills the mind of the ſpeaker, ſhews leſs pedantry and more taſte than bare citations; and a mind imbued with elegant knowledge will inevitably betray the opulence of its

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eſſays which adorn our language. But, perhaps, it might be better to regale the mind with them ſingly, at different times, than to read, at the ſame ſitting, a multitude of ſhort pieces on diſſimilar and unconnected topics, *by way of getting through the book.*

its reſources, even on topics which do not relate to ſcience or literature. Well-informed perſons will eaſy be diſcovered to have read the beſt books, though they are not always detailing liſts of authors; for a muſter roll of names may be learnt from the catalogue as well as from the library. Though honey owes its exquiſite taſte to the fragrance of the ſweeteſt flowers, yet the ſkill of the little artificer appears in this, that the delicious ſtores are ſo admirably worked up, and there is ſuch a due proportion obſerved in mixing them, that the perfection of the whole conſiſts in its not taſting individually of the roſe, the jeſſamine, or the carnation, or any of thoſe ſweets of the very eſſence of all which it is compounded. But true judgment will diſcover the infuſion which true modeſty will not diſplay; and even common ſubjects paſſing through a cultivated underſtanding, borrow a flavour of its richneſs. A power of apt ſelection is more valuable than any power of general retention; and an appoſite remark, which ſhoots ſtraight to the point, demands a higher capacity of mind than an hundred ſimple acts of memory; for the buſineſs of the memory is only to ſtore up materials which the underſtanding is to mix and work up with its native faculties, and which the judgment is to bring out and apply. But young women who have more vivacity than ſenſe, and more vanity than vivacity, often riſk the charge of abſurdity to eſcape that of ignorance,

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and will even compare two authors who are totally unlike, rather than miſs the occaſion to ſhew that they have read both.

Among the arts to ſpoil converſation, ſome ladies poſſeſs that of ſuddenly diverting it from the channel in which it was beneficially flowing, becauſe ſome *word* uſed by the perſon who was ſpeaking has accidentally ſtruck out a new train of thinking in their own minds, and not becauſe the general *idea* expreſſed has ſtruck out a correſponding idea, which ſort of colliſion is indeed the way of eliciting the true fire. Young ladies, whoſe ſprightlineſs has not been diſciplined by a correct education, conſider how things may be prettily ſaid, rather than how they may be prudently or ſeaſonably ſpoken; and willingly hazard being thought wrong, or raſh, or vain, for the chance of being reckoned pleaſant. The graces of rhetoric captivate them more than the juſteſt deductions of reaſon; when they have no arms they uſe flowers, and to repel an argument, they arm themſelves with a metaphor. Thoſe alſo who do not aim ſo high as eloquence, are often ſurprized that you refuſe to accept of a prejudice inſtead of a reaſon; they are apt to take up with a probability inſtead of a demonſtration, and cheaply put you off with an aſſertion, when you are requiring a proof. The mode of education which renders them light in aſſumption, and ſuperficial in reaſoning, renders them alſo impatient of oppoſition; and if they happen

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to poſſeſs beauty, and to be vain of it, they may be tempted to conſider that this is an additional proof of their being always in the right. In this caſe, they will not aſk you to ſubmit your judgment to the force of their argument, ſo much as to the authority of their charms.

The ſame fault in the mind, ſtrengthened by the ſame error, (a neglected education,) leads lively women often to pronounce on a queſtion without examining it: on any given point they ſeldomer *doubt* than men; not becauſe they are more clear-ſighted, but becauſe they have not been accuſtomed to look into a ſubject long enough to diſcover its depths and its intricacies; and not diſcerning its difficulties, they conclude that it has none. Is it a contradiction to ſay, that they ſeem at once to be quick-ſighted and ſhort-ſighted? What they ſee at all, they commonly ſee at once; a little difficulty diſcourages them; and, having caught a haſty glimpſe of a ſubject, they ruſh to this concluſion, that either there is no more to be ſeen, or that what is behind will not pay them for the trouble of ſearching. They purſue their object eagerly, but not regularly; rapidly, but not pertinaciouſly; for they want that obſtinate patience of inveſtigation which grows ſtouter by repulſe. What they have not attained, they do not believe exiſts; what they cannot ſeize at once, they perſuade themſelves is not worth having.

Is a ſubject of moment ſtarted in company? While the more ſagacious are deliberating on its difficulties, and viewing it under all its aſpects, in order to form a competent judgment before they decide; you will often find the moſt ſuperficial women preſent determine the matter, without heſitation. Not ſeeing the perplexities in which the queſtion is involved, ſhe wonders at the want of penetration in the man whoſe very penetration keeps him ſilent. She ſecretly deſpiſes the dull perception and ſlow deciſion of him who is patiently *untying* the knot which ſhe fancies ſhe exhibits more dexterity by *cutting*. By this ſhallow ſprightlineſs, of which vanity is commonly the radical principle, the moſt ignorant perſon in the company leads the converſation, while he whoſe opinion was beſt worth having is diſcouraged from delivering it, and an important ſubject is diſmiſſed without diſcuſſion, by inconſequent flippancy and voluble raſhneſs. It is this abundance of florid talk, from ſuperficial matter, which has brought on ſo many of the ſex the charge of *inverting* the Apoſtle's precept, and being *ſwift* to *ſpeak*, *ſlow* to *hear*.

For if the great Roman Orator could obſerve, that ſilence was ſo important a part of converſation, that "there was not only an art but an "eloquence in it," how peculiarly does the remark apply to the modeſty of youthful females! But the ſilence of liſtleſs and vapid ignorance,

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and the animated ſilence of ſparkling intelligence, are two things almoſt as obviouſly diſtinct, as the wiſdom and the folly of the tongue. An inviolable and marked attention may ſhew, that a woman is pleaſed with a ſubject, and an illuminated countenance may prove that ſhe underſtands it, almoſt as unequivocally as language itſelf could do; and this, with a modeſt queſtion, which indicates at once rational curioſity and becoming diffidence, is in many caſes as large a ſhare of the converſation as it is decorous for feminine delicacy to take. It is alſo as flattering an encouragement as men of ſenſe and politeneſs require, for purſuing ſuch topics in the preſence of women, which they would be more diſpoſed to do, did they oftener gain by it the attention which it is natural to wiſh to excite; and did women themſelves diſcover that deſire of improvement which liberal-minded men are pleaſed with communicating.

Yet do we not ſometimes ſee an impatience to be heard (nor is it a *feminine* failing only) which good-breeding can ſcarcely ſubdue? And even when theſe incorrigible talkers are compelled to be quiet, is it not evident that they are not ſilent becauſe they are liſtening to what is ſaid, but becauſe they are thinking of what they themſelves ſhall ſay when they can ſeize the firſt lucky interval for which they are ſo narrowly watching? The very turn of their countenance betrays that they do not take the

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ſlighteſt degree of intereſt in any thing that is ſaid by others, except with a view to lie in wait for any little chaſm in the diſcourſe, on which they may lay hold, and give vent to their own overflowing vanity.

But converſation muſt not be conſidered as a ſtage for the diſplay of our talents, ſo much as a field for the exerciſe and improvement of our virtues; as a means for promoting the glory of our Creator, and the good and happineſs of our fellow-creatures. Well-bred and intelligent Chriſtians are not, when they join in ſociety, to conſider themſelves as entering the liſts like intellectual prize-fighters, in order to exhibit their own vigour and dexterity, to diſcomfit their adverſary, and to bear away the palm of victory. Truth and not triumph ſhould be the invariable object; and there are few occaſions in life, in which we are more unremittingly called upon to watch ourſelves narrowly, and to reſiſt the aſſaults of various temptations, than in converſation. Vanity, jealouſy, envy, miſrepreſentation, reſentment, diſdain, levity, impatience, inſincerity, and pride, will in turn ſolicit to be gratified. Conſtantly to ſtruggle againſt the deſire of being thought more wiſe, more witty, and more knowing, than thoſe with whom we aſſociate, demands the inceſſant exertion of Chriſtian vigilance, a vigilance which the generality are far from ſuſpecting to be at all neceſſary in the intercourſe of common ſociety. On the contrary,

trary, cheerful converſation is rather conſidered as an exemption and releaſe from watchfulneſs, than as an additional obligation to it. But a circumſpect ſoldier of Chriſt will never be off his poſt; even when he is not called to public combat by the open aſſaults of his great ſpiritual enemy, he muſt ſtill be acting as a centinel, for the dangers of an ordinary Chriſtian will ariſe more from theſe little ſkirmiſhes which are daily happening in the warfare of human life, than from thoſe pitched battles which more rarely occur, and for which he will probably think it ſufficient to be armed.

But ſociety, as was obſerved before, is not a ſtage on which to throw down our gauntlet, and prove our own proweſs by the number of falls we give to our adverſary; ſo far from it, true good-breeding as well as Chriſtianity, conſiders as an indiſpenſable requiſite for converſation, the diſpoſition to bring forward to notice any talent in others, which their own modeſty, or conſcious inferiority, would lead them to keep back. To do this with effect requires a penetration exerciſed to diſcern merit, and a generous candour which delights in drawing it out. There are few who cannot converſe tolerably on ſome one topic; what that is, we ſhould try to diſcover, and in general introduce that topic, though to the ſuppreſſion of any one on which we ourſelves are ſuppoſed to excel: and however ſuperior we may be in other reſpects to the perſons in

in queſtion, we may, perhaps, in that particular point, improve by them; or if we do not gain information, we ſhall at leaſt gain a wholeſome exerciſe to our humility and ſelf-denial; we ſhall be reſtraining our own impetuoſity; we ſhall, if we take this courſe on juſt occaſions only, and ſo as to beware leſt we gratify the vanity of others, be giving confidence to a doubting, or cheerfulneſs to a depreſſed ſpirit. And to place a juſt remark, hazarded by the diffident, in the moſt advantageous point of view; to call the attention of the inattentive, the forward, and the ſelf-ſufficient, to the unobtruſive merit of ſome quiet perſon in the company, who, though of much worth, is perhaps of little note; theſe are requiſites for converſation, leſs brilliant, but far more valuable, than the power of exciting burſts of laughter by the brighteſt wit, or of extorting admiration by the moſt poignant ſallies of ridicule.

For wit is, of all the qualities of the female mind, that which requires the ſevereſt caſtigation; yet the temperate exerciſe of this faſcinating quality throws an additional luſtre round the character of an amiable woman; for to manage with diſcreet modeſty a dangerous talent, confers a higher praiſe than can be claimed by thoſe from whom the abſence of the talent removes the temptation to miſemploy it. To women, wit is a peculiarly perilous poſſeſſion, which nothing ſhort of the ſobermindedneſs of Religion

can keep in ſubjection; and perhaps there is ſcarcely any one order of human beings that requires the powerful curb of Chriſtian control more than women whoſe genius has this tendency. Intemperate wit craves admiration as its natural aliment; it lives on flattery as its daily bread. The profeſſed wit is a hungry beggar, and ſubſiſts on the extorted alms of perpetual panegyric; and like the vulture in the Grecian fable, its appetite increaſes by indulgence. Simple truth and ſober approbation become taſteleſs and inſipid to the palate, daily vitiated by the delicious poignances of exaggerated commendation. Under the above reſtrictions, however, wit may be ſafely and pleaſantly exerciſed; for *chaſtiſed wit* is an elegant and well-bred, and not unfeminine quality. But *humour*, eſpecially if it degenerate into imitation, or mimicry, is very ſparingly to be ventured on; for it is ſo difficult totally to detach it from the ſuſpicion of buffoonery, that a woman will be likely to loſe more of that delicacy which is her appropriate grace, and without which every other quality loſes its charm, than ſhe will gain in another way in the eyes of the judicious, by the moſt ſucceſsful diſplay of humour.

But if it be true that ſome women are too apt to affect brilliancy and diſplay in their own diſcourſe, and to undervalue the more humble pretenſions of leſs ſhowy characters; it muſt be confeſſed

confeſſed alſo, that ſome of more ordinary abilities are now and then guilty of the oppoſite error, and fooliſhly affect to value themſelves on not making uſe of the underſtanding they really poſſeſs; and affect to be thought even more ſilly than they are. They exhibit no ſmall ſatisfaction in ridiculing women of high intellectual endowments, while they exclaim with much affected humility, and much real envy, that "they "are thankful *they* are not geniuſes." Now, though one is glad to hear gratitude expreſſed on any occaſion, yet the want of ſenſe is really no ſuch great mercy to be thankful for; and it would indicate a better ſpirit, were they to pray to be enabled to make a right uſe of the moderate underſtanding they poſſeſs, than to expoſe with a too viſible pleaſure the imaginary or real defects of their more ſhining acquaintance. Women of the brighteſt faculties ſhould not only "bear thoſe faculties meekly," but ſhould conſider it as no derogation, cheerfully to fulfil thoſe humbler offices which make up the buſineſs and the duties of common life, while they ſhould always take into the account the nobler exertions as well as the higher reſponſibility attached to higher gifts. In the mean time women of lower attainments ſhould exert to the utmoſt ſuch abilities as Providence has aſſigned them; and while they ſhould not deride excellencies which are above their reach, they ſhould not deſpond

at an inferiority which did not depend on themſelves; nor, becauſe God has denied them ten talents, ſhould they forget that they are equally reſponſible for the one he *has* allotted them, but ſet about devoting that one with humble diligence to the glory of the Giver.

Vanity, however, is not the monopoly of talents. Let not a young lady, therefore, fancy that ſhe is humble, merely becauſe ſhe is not ingenious, or conſider the abſence of talents as the criterion of worth. Humility is not the excluſive privilege of dulneſs. Folly is as conceited as wit, and ignorance many a time outſtrips knowledge in the race of vanity. Equally earneſt competitions ſpring from cauſes leſs worthy to excite them than wit and genius. Vanity inſinuates itſelf into the female heart under a variety of unſuſpected forms, and is on the watch to enter it by ſeizing on many a little paſs which was not thought worth guarding.

Who has not ſeen as reſtleſs emotion agitate the features of an anxious matron, while peace and fame hung trembling in doubtful ſuſpence on the ſucceſs of a ſoup or a ſauce, on which ſentence was about to be pronounced by ſome conſummate critic, as could have been excited by any competition for literary renown, or any ſtruggle for conteſted wit? Anxiety for fame is by no means meaſured by the real value of the object purſued, but by the degree of eſtimation in which it is held by the purſuer. Nor was the illuſtrious

illuſtrious hero of Greece more effectually hindered from ſleeping by the trophies of Miltiades, than many a modiſh damſel by the eclipſing ſuperiority of ſome newer decoration exhibited by her more ſucceſsful friend.

There is another ſpecies of vanity in ſome women which diſguiſes itſelf under the thin veil of an affected humility; they will accuſe themſelves of ſome fault from which they are remarkably exempt, and lament the want of ſome talent which they are rather notorious for poſſeſſing. Now though the wiſeſt are commonly the moſt humble, and thoſe who are freeſt from faults are moſt forward in confeſſing error; yet the practice we are cenſuring is not only a clumſy trap for praiſe, but there is a diſingenuous intention, by renouncing a quality they eminently poſſeſs, to gain credit for others in which they are really deficient. All affectation involves a ſpecies of deceit. The Apoſtle when he enjoins, "not to think of ourſelves more highly "than we ought," does not exhort us to think *falſely* of ourſelves, but to think "ſoberly;" and it is worth obſerving that in this injunction he does not uſe the word *ſpeak*, but *think*, inferring poſſibly, that it would be ſafer to *ſpeak* little of ourſelves or not at all; for it is ſo far from being an unequivocal proof of our humility to talk even of our defects, that while we make *ſelf* the ſubject, in whatever way, ſelf-love contrives to be gratified, and will even be content that

that our faults ſhould be talked of, rather than that we ſhould not be talked of at all. Some are alſo attacked with ſuch proud fits of humility, that while they are ready to accuſe themſelves of almoſt every ſin in the lump, they yet take fire at the imputation of the ſlighteſt *individual* fault; and inſtantly enter upon their own vindication as warmly as if you, and not themſelves, had brought forward the charge. The truth is, they ventured to condemn themſelves, in the full confidence that you would contradict their ſelf-accuſation; the laſt thing they intended was that you ſhould believe them, and they are never ſo much piqued and diſappointed as when they are taken at their word.

Of the various ſhapes and undefined forms into which vanity branches out in converſation, there is no end. Out of a reſtleſs deſire to pleaſe, grows the vain deſire to aſtoniſh: for from vanity, as much as from credulity, ariſes that ſtrong love of the marvellous, with which the converſation of the ill-educated abounds. Hence that fondneſs for dealing in narratives hardly within the compaſs of poſſibility. Here vanity has many ſhades of gratification; thoſe ſhades will be ſtronger or weaker, whether the relater chance to have been an eye-witneſs of the wonder ſhe recounts; or whether ſhe claim only the ſecond-hand renown of its having happened to her friend, or the ſtill remoter celebrity of its having been witneſſed

witneſſed only by her friend's friend: but even though that friend only knew the man, who remembered the woman, who converſed with the perſon, who actually beheld the thing which is now cauſing admiration in the company, ſtill *ſelf*, though in a fainter degree, is brought into notice, and the relater contrives in ſome circuitous and diſtant way to be connected with the wonder.

To correct this propenſity "to elevate and "ſurpriſe*," it would be well in mixed ſociety to abſtain altogether from hazarding ſtories, which though they may not be abſolutely falſe, yet lying without the verge of probability, are apt to impeach the credit of the narrator; in whom the very conſciouſneſs that ſhe is not believed, excites an increaſed eagerneſs to depart ſtill farther from the ſoberneſs of truth, and induces a habit of vehement aſſeveration, which is too often called in to help out a queſtionable point†.

There

* The Rehearſal.

† This is alſo a good rule in compoſition. An event, though it may actually have happened, yet if it be out of the reach of probability, or contrary to the common courſe of nature, will ſeldom be choſen as a ſubject by a writer of good taſte; for he knows that a probable fiction will intereſt the feelings more than an unlikely truth. Veriſimilitude is indeed the poet's truth, but the truth of the moraliſt is of a more ſturdy growth.

There is another ſhape, and a very deformed ſhape it is, in which loquacious vanity ſhews itſelf; I mean the betraying of confidence. Though the act be treacherous, yet the fault, in the firſt inſtance, is not treachery, but vanity. It does not ſo often ſpring from the miſchievous deſire of divulging a ſecret, as from the pride of having been truſted with it. It is the ſecret inclination of mixing *ſelf* with whatever is important. The ſecret would be of little value, if the revealing it did not ſerve to intimate *our* connexion with it; the pleaſure of its having been depoſited with us would be nothing, if others may not know that it has been ſo depoſited.—When we continue to ſee the variety of ſerious evils which this principle involves, ſhall we perſiſt in aſſerting that vanity is a ſlender miſchief?

There is one offence committed in converſation of much too ſerious a nature to be overlooked, or to be animadverted on without ſorrow and indignation: I mean, the habitual and thoughtleſs profaneneſs of thoſe who are repeatedly invoking their Maker's name on occaſions the moſt trivial. It is offenſive in all its variety of aſpects;—it is very pernicious in its *effects*;—it is a *growing* evil;—thoſe who are moſt guilty of it, are from habit hardly conſcious when they do it; are not aware of the ſin; and for both theſe reaſons, without the admonitions of faithful friendſhip, are little likely

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to diſcontinue it.—It is utterly INEXCUSABLE; —it has none of the palliatives of *temptation* which other vices plead, and in that reſpect ſtands diſtinguiſhed from all others both in its nature and degree of guilt.—Like many other ſins, however, it is at once cauſe and effect; it *proceeds* from want of love and reverence to the beſt of Beings, and *cauſes* the want of that love both in themſelves and others. Yet with all thoſe aggravations, there is, perhaps, hardly any ſin ſo frequently committed, ſo ſlightly cenſured, ſo ſeldom repented of, and ſo little guarded againſt. On the ſcore of *impropriety* too, it is additionally offenſive, as being utterly repugnant to female delicacy, which often does not ſee the turpitude of this ſin, while it affects to be ſhocked at ſwearing in a man. Now this ſpecies of profaneneſs is not only ſwearing, but, perhaps, in ſome reſpects, ſwearing of the worſt ſort; as it is a *direct* breach of an expreſs command, and offends againſt the *very letter* of that law which ſays in ſo many words, THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN. It offends againſt politeneſs and *good breeding*; for thoſe who commit it, little think of the pain they are inflicting on the ſober mind, which is deeply wounded when it hears the holy name it loves diſhonoured; and it is as contrary to good breeding to give pain, as it is to true piety to be profane. It is aſtoniſhing that the refined and elegant ſhould

not reprobate this practice for its coarſeneſs and vulgarity, as much as the pious abhor it for its ſinfulneſs.

I would endeavour to give ſome faint idea of the groſſneſs of this offence, by an analogy, (oh! how inadequate!) with which the feeling heart, even though not ſeaſoned with religion, may yet be touched. To ſuch I would earneſtly ſay:—Suppoſe you had ſome beloved friend,—to put the caſe ſtill more ſtrongly, a departed friend —a revered parent, perhaps,—whoſe image never occurs without awaking in your boſom ſentiments of tender love and lively gratitude; how would you feel if you heard this honoured name *banded about* with unfeeling familiarity and indecent levity; or at beſt, thruſt into every pauſe of ſpeech as a vulgar expletive? Does not your affectionate heart recoil at the thought? And yet the hallowed name of your trueſt Benefactor, your heavenly Father, your beſt Friend, who gives you all you enjoy, thoſe very friends in whom you ſo much delight, thoſe very talents with which you diſhonour him, thoſe very organs of ſpeech with which you blaſpheme him, is treated with an irreverence, a contempt, a wantonneſs with which you cannot bear the very thought or mention of treating a human friend. His name is impiouſly, is unfeelingly, is ungratefully ſingled out as the object of decided irreverence, of ſyſtematic contempt, of thoughtleſs levity. His ſacred name

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is uſed indiſcriminately to expreſs anger, joy, grief, ſurpriſe, impatience; and what is almoſt ſtill more unpardonable than all, it is wantonly uſed as a mere unmeaning expletive, which, being excited by no temptation, can have nothing to extenuate it; which, cauſing no emotion, can have nothing to recommend it, unleſs it be the pleaſure of the ſin.

Among the deep, but leſs obvious miſchiefs of converſation, *miſrepreſentation* muſt not be overlooked. Self-love is continually at work, to give to all we ſay a bias in our own favour. The counteraction of this fault ſhould be ſet about in the earlieſt ſtages of education. If young perſons have not been diſcouraged in the natural, but evil, propenſity to relate every diſpute they have had with others to their own advantage; if they have not been trained to the bounden duty of doing juſtice even to thoſe with whom they are at variance; if they have not been led to aim at a complete impartiality in their little narratives, and inſtructed never to take advantage of the abſence of the other party, in order to make the ſtory lean to their own ſide more than the truth will admit; how ſhall we in advanced life look for correct habits, for unprejudiced repreſentations, for fidelity, accuracy, and unbiaſſed juſtice?

Yet, how often in ſociety, otherwiſe reſpectable, are we pained with narrations in which prejudice warps, and ſelf-love blinds! How often

ten do we ſee, that withholding part of a truth anſwers the worſt ends of a falſhood! How often regret the unfair turn given to a cauſe, by placing a ſentiment in one point of view, which the ſpeaker had uſed in another! the letter of truth preſerved where its ſpirit is violated! a ſuperſtitious exactneſs ſcrupulouſly maintained in the underparts of a detail, in order to impreſs ſuch an idea of integrity as ſhall gain credit for the *miſrepreſenter*, while he is deſignedly miſtating the leading principle. How may we obſerve a new character given to a fact by a different look, tone, or emphaſis, which alters it as much as words could have done! the falſe impreſſion of a ſermon conveyed, when we do not like the preacher, or when through him we wiſh to make religion itſelf ridiculous! the care to avoid literal untruths, while the miſchief is better effected by the unfair quotation of a paſſage diveſted of its context; the bringing together detached portions of a ſubject, and making thoſe parts ludicrous, when connected, which were ſerious in their diſtinct poſition! the inſidious uſe made of a ſentiment by repreſenting it as the *opinion* of him who had only brought it forward in order to expoſe it! the relating opinions which had merely been put hypothetically, as if they were the avowed principles of him we would diſcredit! that ſubtle falſhood which is ſo made to incorporate with

with a certain quantity of truth, that the moſt ſkilful moral chemiſt cannot analyſe or ſeparate them! for a good *miſrepreſenter* knows that a ſucceſsful lie muſt have a certain infuſion of truth, or it will not go down. And this amalgamation is the teſt of his ſkill; for too *much* truth would defeat the end of his miſchief; and too *little* would deſtroy the belief of the hearer. All that indefinable ambiguity and equivocation; all that prudent deceit, which is rather implied than expreſſed; thoſe more delicate artifices of the ſchool of Loyola and of Cheſterfield, which allow us, when we dare not deny a truth, yet ſo to diſguiſe and diſcolour it, that the truth we relate ſhall not reſemble the truth we heard! Theſe and all the thouſand ſhades of ſimulation and diſſimulation will be carefully guarded againſt in the converſation of vigilant Chriſtians.

Again, it is furpriſing to mark the common deviations from ſtrict veracity which ſpring, not from enmity to truth, not from intentional deceit, not from malevolence or envy, not from the leaſt deſign to injure; but from mere levity, habitual inattention, and a current notion that it is not worth while to be correct in ſmall things. But here the doctrine of habits comes in with great force, and in that view no error is ſmall. The cure of this diſeaſe in its more inveterate ſtages being next to impoſſible, its prevention

prevention ought to be one of the earlieſt objects of education *.

The grievous fault of groſs and obvious detraction which infects converſation, has been ſo heavily and ſo juſtly condemned by divines and moraliſts, that the ſubject, copious as it is, is exhauſted. But there is an error of an oppoſite complexion, which we have before noticed, and againſt which the peculiar temper of the times requires that young ladies of a better caſt ſhould be guarded. From the narrowneſs of their own ſphere of obſervation, they are ſometimes addicted to accuſe of uncharitableneſs, that diſtinguiſhing judgment which, reſulting from a ſound penetration and a zeal for truth, forbids perſons of a very correct principle to be indiſcriminately prodigal of commendation without inquiry, and without diſtinction. There is an affectation of candour, which is almoſt as miſchievous as calumny itſelf; nay, if it be leſs injurious in its individual application, it is, perhaps, more alarming in its general principle, as it lays waſte the ſtrong fences which ſeparate good from evil. They know, as a general principle, (though they ſometimes calumniate,) that calumny is wrong; but they have not been told that flattery is wrong alſo; and youth, being apt to fancy that the direct contrary to wrong muſt neceſſarily be right, are

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* See the Chapter on the Uſe of Definitions.

apt to be driven into violent extremes. The dread of being only ſuſpected of one fault, makes them actually guilty of the oppoſite; and to avoid the charge of harſhneſs or of envy, they plunge into inſincerity and falſhood. In this they are actuated either by an unſound judgment which does not ſee what is right, or an unſound principle which prefers what is wrong.

In this age of high-minded independence, when our youth are apt to ſet up for themſelves, and every man is too much diſpoſed to be his own legiſlator, without looking to the eſtabliſhed law of the land as his ſtandard; and to ſet up for his own divine, without looking to the revealed will of God as his rule—by a candour equally vicious with our vanity, we are alſo complaiſantly led to *give* the latitude we *take*: and it is become too frequent a practice in our *tolerating* young ladies, when ſpeaking of their more erring and miſled acquaintance, to offer for them this flimſy vindication, "that what "they do is right if it appear right to *them*:" —"if *they* ſee the thing in that light, and act "up to it with ſincerity, they cannot be mate-"rially wrong." But the ſtandard of truth, juſtice and religion, muſt neither be elevated nor depreſſed, in order to accommodate it to actual circumſtances; it muſt never be lowered to palliate error, to juſtify folly, or to vindicate vice. Good-natured young people often ſpeak favourably

favourably of unworthy, or extravagantly of common characters, from one of theſe motives; either their own views of excellence are low, or they ſpeak reſpectfully of the undeſerving, to purchaſe for themſelves the reputation of tenderneſs and generoſity; or they laviſh unſparing praiſe on almoſt all alike, in the uſurious hope of buying back univerſal commendation in return; or in thoſe captivating characters in which the ſimple and maſculine language of truth is ſacrificed to the jargon of affected ſoftneſs; and in which ſmooth and pliant manners are ſubſtituted for intrinſic worth, the inexperienced are too apt to *ſuppoſe* virtues, and to *forgive* vices. But they ſhould carefully guard againſt the error of making *manner* the criterion of merit, and of giving unlimited credit to ſtrangers for poſſeſſing every perfection, only becauſe they bring into company the engaging exterior of urbanity and alluring gentleneſs. They ſhould alſo remember that it is an eaſy, but not an honeſt way of obtaining the praiſe of candour, to get into the ſoft and popular habit of ſaying of all their acquaintance, when ſpeaking of them, that *they are ſo good!* True Chriſtian candour conceals faults, but it does not invent virtues. It tenderly forbears to expoſe the evil which may belong to a character, but it dares not aſcribe to it the good which does not exiſt. To correct this propenſity to falſe judgment and inſincerity, it would be well

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to bear in mind, that while every good action, come from what ſource it may, and every good quality, be it found in whomſoever it will, deſerves its fair proportion of diſtinct and willing commendation; yet no character is GOOD in the true ſenſe of the word which is not RELIGIOUS.

In fine—to recapitulate what has been ſaid, with ſome additional hints:—Study to promote both intellectual and moral improvement in converſation; labour to bring into it a diſpoſition to bear with others, and to be watchful over yourſelf; keep out of ſight any prominent talent of your own, which, if indulged, might diſcourage or oppreſs the feeble-minded; and try to bring their modeſt virtues into notice. If you know any one preſent to poſſeſs any particular weakneſs or infirmity, never exerciſe your wit by malicioufly inventing occaſions which may lead her to expoſe or betray it; but give as favourable a turn as you can to the follies which appear, and kindly help her to keep the reſt out of ſight. Never gratify your own humour, by hazarding what you ſuſpect may wound any one preſent in their perſons, connections, profeſſions in life, or religious opinions; and do not forget to examine whether the laugh your wit has raiſed be never bought at this expence. Give credit to thoſe who, without your kindneſs, will get none; do not talk *at* any one whom you dare not talk *to*, unleſs from motives

motives in which the golden rule will bear you out. Seek neither to ſhine nor to triumph; and if you ſeek to pleaſe, take care that it be in order to convert the influence you may gain by pleaſing, to the good of others. Cultivate true politeneſs, for it grows out of true principle, and is conſiſtent with the Goſpel of Chriſt; but avoid thoſe feigned attentions which are not ſtimulated by good-will, and thoſe ſtated profeſſions of fondneſs which are not dictated by eſteem. Remember that the pleaſure of being thought *amiable* by ſtrangers, may be too dearly purchaſed, if it be purchaſed at the expence of truth and ſimplicity: remember, that Simplicity is the firſt charm in manner, as Truth is in mind; and could Truth make herſelf viſible, ſhe would appear inveſted in Simplicity.

Remember alſo, that true good nature is the ſoul, of which politeneſs is only the garb. It is not that artificial quality which is taken up by many when they go into ſociety, in order to charm thoſe whom it is not their particular buſineſs to pleaſe; and is laid down when they return home to thoſe to whom to appear amiable is a real duty. It is not that faſcinating but deceitful ſoftneſs, which, after having acted over a hundred ſcenes of the moſt lively ſympathy and tender intereſt with every ſlight acquaintance; after having exhauſted every phraſe of feeling, for the trivial ſickneſſes or petty ſorrows of multitudes who are ſcarcely known,

leaves

leaves it doubtful whether a grain of real feeling or genuine ſympathy be reſerved for the deareſt connections: and which diſmiſſes a woman to her immediate friends with little affection, and to her own family with little attachment.

True good-nature, that which alone deſerves the name, is not a holiday ornament, but an every-day habit. It does not conſiſt in ſervile complaiſance, or diſhoneſt flattery, or affected ſympathy, or unqualified aſſent, or unwarrantable compliance, or eternal ſmiles. Before it can be allowed to rank with the virtues, it muſt be wrought up from a humour into a principle, from an occaſional diſpoſition into a habit. It muſt be the reſult of an equal and well-governed mind, not the ſtart of caſual gaiety, the trick of deſigning vanity, or the whim of capricious fondneſs. It is compounded of kindneſs, forbearance, forgiveneſs, and ſelf-denial; "it "ſeeketh not its own," but muſt be capable of making continual ſacrifices of its own taſtes, humours, and ſelf-love; but among the ſacrifices it makes, it muſt never include its integrity. Politeneſs on the one hand, and Inſenſibility on the other, aſſume its name, and wear its honours; but they aſſume the honours of a triumph, without the merit of a victory; for politeneſs ſubdues nothing, and inſenſibility has nothing to ſubdue. Good-nature of the true caſt,

caſt, and under the foregoing regulations, is above all price in the common intercourſe of domeſtic ſociety; for an ordinary quality, which is conſtantly brought into action by the perpetually recurring though minute events of daily life, is of higher value than more brilliant qualities which are more ſeldom called into uſe: as ſmall pieces of ordinary current coin are of more importance in the commerce of the world than the medals of the antiquary. And, indeed, Chriſtianity has given that new turn to the character of all the virtues, that perhaps it is the beſt teſt of the excellence of many that they have little brilliancy in them. The Chriſtian Religion has degraded ſome ſplendid qualities from the rank they held, and elevated thoſe which were obſcure into diſtinction.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XV.

On the Danger of an ill-directed Senſibility.

IN conſidering the human mind with a view to its improvement, it is prudent to endeavour to diſcover the natural bent of the individual character; and having found it, to direct your force againſt that ſide on which the warp lies, that you may leſſen by counteraction the defect which you might be promoting, by applying your aid in a contrary direction. But the miſfortune is, people who mean better than they judge are apt to take up a ſet of general rules, good perhaps in themſelves, and originally gleaned from experience and obſervation on the nature of human things, but not applicable in all caſes. Theſe rules they keep by them as noſtrums of univerſal efficacy, which they therefore often bring out for uſe in caſes to which they do not apply. For to make any remedy effectual, it is not enough to know the medicine, you muſt ſtudy the conſtitution alſo; if there be not a congruity between the two, you may be injuring one patient by the means which are requiſite to raiſe and reſtore another, whoſe temperament is of a contrary deſcription.

In

In forming the female character it is of importance that thoſe on whom the taſk devolves ſhould poſſeſs ſo much penetration as accurately to diſcern the degree of ſenſibility, and ſo much judgment as to accommodate the treatment to the individual character. By conſtantly ſtimulating and extolling feelings naturally quick, thoſe feelings will be rendered too acute and irritable. On the other hand, a calm and equable temper will become obtuſe by the total want of excitement: the former treatment converts the feelings into a ſource of error, agitation, and calamity; the latter ſtarves their native energy, deadens the affections, and produces a cold, dull, ſelfiſh ſpirit; for the human mind is an inſtrument which will loſe its ſweetneſs if ſtrained too high, and will be deprived of its tone and ſtrength if not ſufficiently raiſed.

It is cruel to chill the precious ſenſibility of an ingenuous ſoul, by treating with ſupercilious coldneſs and unfeeling ridicule every indication of a warm, tender, diſintereſted, and enthuſiaſtic ſpirit, as if it exhibited ſymptoms of a deficiency in underſtanding or in prudence. How many are apt to intimate, with a ſmile of mingled pity and contempt, in conſidering ſuch a character, that when ſhe knows the world, that is, in other words, when ſhe ſhall be grown cunning, ſelfiſh, and ſuſpicious, ſhe will be aſhamed of her preſent glow of honeſt warmth, and of her lovely ſuſceptibility of heart.

heart. May ſhe never know the world, if the knowledge of it muſt be acquired at ſuch an expence! But to ſenſible hearts, every indication of genuine feeling will be dear, for they well know that it is this temper which, by the guidance of the Divine Spirit, may make her one day become more enamoured of the beauty of holineſs; which, with the co-operation of principle, and under its direction, will render her the lively agent of Providence in diminiſhing the miſery that is in the world; into which miſery this temper will give her a quicker intuition than colder characters poſſeſs. It is this temper which, when it is touched and purified by a "live coal from the altar *," will give her a keener taſte for the ſpirit of religion, and a quicker zeal in diſcharging its duties. But let it be remembered likewiſe, that as there is no quality in the female character which more raiſes its tone, ſo there is none which will be ſo likely to endanger the peace, and to expoſe the virtue of the poſſeſſor; none which requires to have its luxuriances more carefully watched, and its wild ſhoots more cloſely lopped.

For young women of affections naturally warm, but not carefully diſciplined, are in danger of incurring an unnatural irritability; and while their happineſs falls a victim to the exceſs of uncontrolled feelings, they are liable at

* Iſaiah, vi. 6.

at the ſame time to indulge a vanity of all others the moſt prepoſterous, that of being vain of their very defect. They have heard ſenſibility highly commended, without having heard any thing of thoſe bounds and fences which were intended to confine it, and without having been imbued with that principle which would have given it a beneficial direction. Conſcious that they poſſeſs the quality itſelf in the extreme, and not aware that they want all that makes that quality ſafeand delightful, they plunge headlong into thoſe ſins and miſeries from which they conceitedly and ignorantly imagine, that not principle but coldneſs has preſerved the more ſober-minded and well-inſtructed of their ſex.

But as it would be foreign to the preſent deſign to expatiate on thoſe criminal exceſſes which are ſome of the ſad effects of ungoverned paſſion, it is only intended here to hazard a few remarks on thoſe lighter conſequences of it which conſiſt in the loſs of comfort without ruin of character, and occaſion the privation of much of the happineſs of life without involving any very cenſurable degree of guilt or diſcredit. It may, however, be incidentally remarked, and let it be carefully remembered, that if no women have riſen ſo high in the ſcale of moral excellence as thoſe whoſe natural warmth has been conſcientiouſly governed by its true guide, and directed to its true end; ſo none have furniſhed ſuch deplorable inſtances

of

of extreme depravity as thoſe who, through the ignorance or the dereliction of principle, have been abandoned by the exceſs of this very temper to the violence of ungoverned paſſions and uncontrolled inclinations. Perhaps, if we were to inquire into the remote cauſe of ſome of the blackeſt crimes which ſtain the annals of mankind, profligacy, murder, and eſpecially ſuicide, we might trace them back to this original principle, an ungoverned Senſibility.

Notwithſtanding all the fine theories in proſe and verſe to which this topic has given birth, it will be found that very exquiſite ſenſibility contributes ſo little to *happineſs*, and may yet be made to contribute ſo much to *uſefulneſs*, that it may, perhaps, be generally conſidered as beſtowed for an exerciſe to the poſſeſſor's own virtue, and at the ſame time, as a keen inſtrument with which he may better work for the good of others.

Women of this caſt of mind are leſs careful to avoid the charge of unbounded extremes, than to eſcape at all events the imputation of inſenſibility. They are little alarmed at the danger of *exceeding*, though terrified at the ſuſpicion of *coming ſhort*, of what they take to be the extreme point of feeling. They will even reſolve to prove the warmth of their ſenſibility, though at the expence of their judgment, and ſometimes alſo of their juſtice. Even when they earneſtly deſire to *be* and to *do* good, they

are apt to employ the wrong inſtrument to accompliſh the right end. They employ the paſſions to do the work of the judgment; forgetting, or not knowing, that the paſſions were not given us to be uſed in the ſearch and diſcovery of truth, which is the office of a cooler and more diſcriminating faculty; but to animate us to warmer zeal in the purſuit and practice of truth, when the judgment ſhall have pointed out what *is* truth.

Through this natural warmth, which they have been juſtly told is ſo pleaſing, but which perhaps, they have not been told will be continually expoſing them to peril and to ſuffering, their joys and ſorrows are exceſſive. Of this extreme irritability, as was before remarked, the ill-educated learn to boaſt as if it were a decided indication of ſuperiority of ſoul, inſtead of labouring to reſtrain it as the exceſs of a temper which ceaſes to be amiable, when it is no longer under the control of the governing faculty. It is misfortune enough to be born more liable to ſuffer and to ſin, from this conformation of mind; it is too much to nouriſh the evil by unreſtrained indulgence; it is ſtill worſe to be proud of ſo miſleading a quality.

Flippancy, impetuoſity, reſentment, and violence of ſpirit, grow out of this diſpoſition, which will be rather promoted than corrected, by the ſyſtem of education on which we have been animadverting; in which ſyſtem, emotions

are

are too early and too much excited, and taſtes and feelings are conſidered as too excluſively making up the whole of the female character; in which the judgment is little exerciſed, the reaſoning powers are ſeldom brought into action, and ſelf-knowledge and ſelf-denial ſcarcely included.

The propenſity of mind which we are conſidering, if unchecked, lays its poſſeſſors open to unjuſt prepoſſeſſions, and expoſes them to all the danger of unfounded attachments. In early youth, not only love at firſt ſight, but alſo friendſhip, of the ſame inſtantaneous growth, ſprings up from an ill-directed ſenſibility; and in after-life, women under the powerful influence of this temper, conſcious that they have much to be borne with, are too readily inclined to ſelect for their confidential connections, flexible and flattering companions, who will indulge and perhaps admire their faults, rather than firm and honeſt friends, who will reprove and would aſſiſt in curing them. We may adopt it as a general maxim, that an obliging, weak, yielding, complaiſant friend, full of ſmall attentions, with little religion, little judgment, and much natural acquieſcence and civility, is a moſt dangerous, though generally a too much deſired confidante: ſhe ſoothes the indolence, and gratifies the vanity of her friend, by reconciling her to her faults, while ſhe neither keeps the underſtanding nor the virtues of that friend in ex-

erciſe; but withholds from her every uſeful truth, which by opening her eyes might give her pain. Theſe obſequious qualities are the "ſoft "green*" on which the ſoul loves to repoſe itſelf. But it is not a refreſhing or a wholeſome repoſe: we ſhould not ſelect, for the ſake of preſent eaſe, a ſoothing flatterer, who will lull us into a pleaſing oblivion of our failings, but a friend who, valuing our ſoul's health above our immediate comfort, will rouſe us from torpid indulgence to animation, vigilance, and virtue.

An ill-directed ſenſibility alſo leads a woman to be injudicious and eccentric in her *charities*; ſhe will be in danger of proportioning her bounty to the immediate effect which the diſtreſſed object produces on her ſenſes: and will therefore be more liberal to a ſmall diſtreſs preſenting itſelf to her own eyes, than to the more preſſing wants and better claims of thoſe miſeries of which ſhe only hears the relation. There is a ſort of ſtage effect which ſome people require for their charities; and ſuch a character as we are conſidering, will be apt alſo to deſire, that the object of her compaſſion ſhall have ſomething intereſting and amiable in it, ſuch as ſhall furniſh pleaſing images and lively pictures to her imagination, and engaging ſubjects for deſcription; forgetting, that in her charities, as well as

* Burke's "Sublime and Beautiful."

as in every thing elſe, ſhe is to be a "follower "of Him who pleaſed not himſelf;" forgetting, that the moſt coarſe and diſguſting object may be as much the repreſentative of Him, who ſaid, "Inaſmuch as ye do it to one of the leaſt of "theſe, ye do it unto me," as the moſt intereſting. Nay, the more uninviting and repulſive caſes may be better teſts of the principle on which we relieve, than thoſe which abound in pathos and intereſt, as we can have leſs ſuſpicion of our motive in the latter caſe than in the former. But, while we ought to neglect neither of theſe ſuppoſed caſes, yet the leſs our feelings are caught by pleaſing circumſtances, the leſs will be the danger of our indulging ſelf-complacency, and the more likely ſhall we be to do what we do for the ſake of Him who has taught us, that no deeds but what are performed on that principle "ſhall be recompenſed at the re-"ſurrection of the juſt."

But through the want of that governing principle which ſhould direct her ſenſibility, a tender-hearted woman, whoſe hand, if ſhe be actually ſurrounded with ſcenes and circumſtances to call it into action, is

Open as day to melting charity;

nevertheleſs may utterly fail in the great and comprehenſive duty of Chriſtian love, for ſhe has feelings which are acted upon ſolely by local circumſtances

circumſtances and preſent events. Only remove her into another ſcene, diſtant from the wants ſhe has been relieving; place her in the lap of indulgence, ſo entrenched with eaſe and pleaſure, ſo immerſed in the ſoftneſs of life, that diſtreſs no longer finds any acceſs to her preſence, but through the faint and dull medium of a diſtant repreſentation: remove her from the ſight and ſound of that miſery, which, when preſent, ſo tenderly affected her—ſhe now forgets that miſery exiſts; as ſhe hears but little, and ſees nothing of want and ſorrow, ſhe is ready to fancy that the world is grown happier than it was: in the meantime, with a quiet conſcience and a thoughtleſs vanity, ſhe has been laviſhing on ſuperfluities that money which ſhe would cheerfully have given to a charitable caſe, had ſhe not forgotten that any ſuch were in exiſtence, becauſe *Pleaſure* had blocked up the avenues through which miſery uſed to find its way to her heart; and now, when again ſuch a caſe forces itſelf into her preſence, ſhe laments with real ſincerity that the money is gone which ſhould have relieved it.

In the meantime, perhaps, other women of leſs natural ſympathy, but whoſe ſympathies are under better regulation, or who act from a principle which requires little ſtimulus, have, by an habitual courſe of ſelf-denial, by a conſtant determination to refuſe themſelves unneceſſary indulgencies, and by guarding againſt that diſſolving

PLEASURE which melts down the firmeſt virtue that allows itſelf to baſk in its beams, have been quietly furniſhing a regular proviſion for miſeries, which their knowledge of the ſtate of the world teaches them are everywhere to be found, and which their obedience to the will of God tells them it is their duty both to find out and to relieve; a general expectation of being liable to be called upon for acts of charity, will lead the conſcientiouſly charitable always to be prepared.

On ſuch a mind as we have been deſcribing, *Novelty* alſo will operate with peculiar force, and in nothing more than in the article of charity. Old eſtabliſhed inſtitutions, whoſe continued exiſtence muſt depend on the continued bounty of that affluence to which they owed their origin, will be ſometimes neglected, as preſenting no variety to the imagination, as having by their uniformity ceaſed to be intereſting, there is now a total failure of thoſe ſprings of mere ſenſitive feeling which ſet the charity a-going, and thoſe ſudden emotions of tenderneſs and guſts of pity, which once were felt, muſt now be excited by newer forms of diſtreſs. As age comes on, that charity which has been the effect of mere feeling, grows cold and rigid; this hardneſs is alſo increaſed by the frequent diſappointments charity has experienced in its too high expectations of the gratitude and ſubſequent merit of thoſe it has relieved; and by withdrawing its bounty, becauſe ſome of its objects

objects have been undeſerving, it gives clear proof that what it beſtowed was for its own gratification; and now finding that ſelf-complacency at an end, it beſtows no longer. Probably too the cauſe of ſo much diſappointment may have been, that ill choice of the objects to which feeling, rather than a diſcriminating judgment, has led. The ſummer ſhowers of mere ſenſibility ſoon dry up, while the living ſpring of Chriſtian charity flows alike in all ſeaſons.

The impatience, levity, and fickleneſs, of which women have been ſomewhat too generally accuſed, are perhaps in no ſmall degree aggravated by the littleneſs and frivolouſneſs of female purſuits. The ſort of education they commonly receive, teaches girls to ſet a great price on ſmall things. Beſides this, they do not always learn to keep a very correct ſcale of degrees for rating the value of the objects of their admiration and attachment; but by a kind of unconſcious idolatry, they rather make a merit of loving *ſupremely* things and perſons which ought to be loved with moderation and in a ſubordinate degree the one to the other. Unluckily, they conſider moderation as ſo neceſſarily indicating a cold heart and narrow ſoul, and they look upon a ſtate of indifference with ſo much horror, that either to love or hate with energy is ſuppoſed by them to proceed from a higher ſtate of mind than is poſſeſſed by more ſteady and equable characters. Whereas it is in fact the criterion of a warm but well-directed ſenſibility, that while it is capable of loving with energy,

energy, it muſt be enabled, by the judgment which governs it, to ſuit and adjuſt its degree of intereſt to the nature and excellence of the object about which it is intereſted; for unreaſonable prepoſſeſſion, diſproportionate attachment, and capricious or precarious fondneſs, is not ſenſibility.

Exceſſive but unintentional *flattery* is another fault into which a ſtrong ſenſibility is in danger of leading its poſſeſſor. A tender heart and a warm imagination conſpire to throw a ſort of radiance round the object of their love, till they are dazzled by a brightneſs of their own creating. The worldly and faſhionable borrow the warm language of ſenſibility without having the really warm feeling; and young ladies get ſuch a habit of ſaying, and eſpecially of writing, ſuch over obliging and flattering things to each other, that this mutual politeneſs, aided by the ſelf-love ſo natural to us all, and by an unwillingneſs to ſearch into our own hearts, keeps up the illuſion, and we get a habit of taking our character from the good we *hear* of ourſelves, which others aſſume, but do not very well know, rather than from the evil we *feel* in ourſelves, and which we therefore ought to be too thoroughly acquainted with to take our opinion of ourſelves from what we hear from others.

Ungoverned ſenſibility is apt to give a wrong direction to its anxieties; and its affection often falls ſhort of the true end of friendſhip. If the object of its regard happen to be ſick, what inquiries! what preſcriptions! what an accumu-

lation is made of caſes in which the remedy its fondneſs ſuggeſts has been ſucceſsful! What an unaffected tenderneſs for the periſhing body! Yet is this ſenſibility equally alive to the immortal intereſts of the ſufferer? Is it not ſilent and at eaſe when it contemplates the deareſt friend perſiſting in opinions eſſentially dangerous; in practices unqueſtionably wrong? Does it not view all this, not only without a generous ardour to point out the peril, and reſcue the friend; but if that friend be ſuppoſed to be dying, does it not even make it the *criterion* of kindneſs to let her die undeceived as to her true ſtate? What a want of true ſenſibility, to feel for the pain, but not for the danger of thoſe we love! Now ſee what ſort of ſenſibility the Bible teaches! "Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, "but thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke him, and "ſhalt not ſuffer ſin upon him*." But let that tenderneſs which ſhrinks from the idea of expoſing what it loves to a momentary pang, figure to itſelf the bare poſſibility, that the object of its own fond affection may not be the object of the Divine favour! Let it ſhrink from the bare conjecture, that "the familiar friend with "whom it has taken ſweet counſel," is going down to the gates of death, unrepenting, unprepared, and yet unwarned.

But mere human ſenſibility goes a ſhorter way to work. Not being able to give its friend the pain of

* Leviticus, xix. 17.

of hearing her faults or of knowing her danger, it works itſelf up into the quieting deluſion that no danger exiſts, at leaſt not for the objects of its own affection; it gratifies itſelf by inventing a ſalvation ſo comprehenſive as ſhall take in all itſelf loves with all their faults; it creates to its own fond heart an ideal and exaggerated divine mercy, which ſhall pardon and receive all in whom this blind ſenſibility has an intereſt, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

In regard to its application to religious purpoſes, it is a teſt that ſenſibility has received its true direction when it is ſupremely turned to the love of God: for to poſſeſs an overflowing fondneſs for our fellow-creatures and fellow-ſinners, and to be cold and inſenſible to the Eſſence of goodneſs and perfection, is an inconſiſtency to which the feeling heart is awfully liable. God has himſelf the firſt claim to the ſenſibility he beſtowed. "He *firſt* loved us:" this is a *natural* cauſe of love. "He loved us "while we were ſinners:" this is a *ſupernatural* cauſe. He continues to love us though we neglect his favours, and ſlight his mercies: this would wear out any earthly kindneſs. He forgives us, not petty neglects, not occaſional ſlights, but grievous ſins, repeated offences, broken vows, and unrequited love. What human friendſhip performs offices ſo calculated to touch the ſoul of ſenſibility?

Thoſe

Thoſe young women in whom feeling is indulged to the excluſion of reaſon and examination, are peculiarly liable to be the dupes of prejudice, raſh deciſions, and falſe judgment. The underſtanding having but little power over the will, their affections are not well poized, and their minds are kept in a ſtate ready to be acted upon by the fluctuations of alternate impulſes; by ſudden and varying impreſſions; by caſual and contradictory circumſtances; and by emotions excited by every accident. Inſtead of being guided by the broad views of general truth, inſtead of having one fixed principle, they are driven on by the impetuoſity of the moment. And this impetuoſity blinds the judgment as much as it miſleads the conduct; ſo that for want of a habit of cool inveſtigation and inquiry, they meet every event without any previouſly formed opinion or ſettled rule of action. And as they do not accuſtom themſelves to appreciate the real value of things, their attention is as likely to be led away by the under parts of a ſubject, as to ſeize on the leading feature. The ſame eagerneſs of mind which hinders the operation of the diſcriminating faculty, leads alſo to the error of determining on the rectitude of an action by its ſucceſs, and to that of making the event of an undertaking decide on its juſtice or propriety: it alſo leads to that ſuperficial and erroneous way of judging which faſtens on exceptions, if they make in one's own favour, as grounds

grounds of reaſoning, while they lead us to overlook received and general rules which tend to eſtabliſh a doctrine contrary to our wiſhes.

Open-hearted, indiſcreet girls, often pick up a few ſtrong notions, which are as falſe in themſelves as they are popular among the claſs in queſtion: ſuch as "that warm friends muſt "make warm enemies;"—that "the generous "love and hate with all their hearts;"—that "a reformed rake makes the beſt huſband;"—that "there is no medium in marriage, but that "it is a ſtate of exquiſite happineſs or exquiſite "miſery;" with many other doctrines of equal currency and equal ſoundneſs! Theſe they conſider as axioms, and adopt as rules of life. From the two firſt of theſe oracular ſayings, girls are in no ſmall danger of becoming unjuſt through the very warmth of their hearts: for they will get a habit of making their eſtimate of the good or ill qualities of others merely in proportion to the greater or leſs degree of kindneſs which they themſelves have received from them. Their eſtimation of general character is thus formed on inſulated and partial grounds; on the accidental circumſtance of perſonal predilection or perſonal pique. Kindneſs to themſelves or their friends involves all poſſible excellence; neglect, all imaginable defects. Friendſhip and gratitude can and ſhould go a great way; but as they cannot convert vice into virtue, ſo they ought never to convert truth into falſehood.

And

And it may be the more neceſſary to be upon our guard in this inſtance, becauſe the very idea of gratitude may miſlead us, by converting injuſtice into the ſemblance of a virtue. Warm expreſſions ſhould therefore be limited to the conveying a ſenſe of our own individual obligations which are real, rather than employed to give an impreſſion of general excellence in the perſon who has obliged us, which may be imaginary. A good man is ſtill good, though it may not have fallen in his way to oblige or ſerve *us*, nay, though he may have neglected, or even unintentionally hurt us: and ſin is ſtill ſin, though committed by the perſon in the world to whom we are the moſt obliged, and whom we moſt love.

We come next to that fatal and moſt indelicate, nay groſs maxim, that "a reformed rake "makes the beſt huſband;" an aphoriſm to which the principles and the happineſs of ſo many young women have been ſacrificed. It goes upon the prepoſterous ſuppoſition, not only that effects do not follow cauſes, but that they oppoſe them; on the ſuppoſition, that habitual vice creates rectitude of character, and that ſin produces happineſs: thus flatly contradicting what the moral government of God uniformly exhibits in the courſe of human events, and what Revelation ſo evidently and univerſally teaches.

For

For it ſhould be obſerved, that the reformation is generally, if not always ſuppoſed to be brought about by the all-conquering force of female charms. Let but a profligate young man have a point to carry by winning the affections of a vain and thoughtleſs girl; he will begin his attack upon her heart by undermining her religious principles, and artfully removing every impediment which might have obſtructed her receiving the addreſſes of a man without character. And while he will lead her not to hear without ridicule the mention of that change of heart, which Scripture teaches and experience proves that the power of Divine grace can work on a vicious character; while he will teach her to ſneer at a change which he would treat with contempt, becauſe he denies the poſſibility of ſo ſtrange and miraculous a converſion; yet he will not ſcruple to ſwear that the power of her beauty has worked a revolution in his own looſe practices which is equally complete and inſtantaneous.

But ſuppoſing it poſſible that his reformation were genuine, it would even then by no means involve the truth of her propoſition, that paſt libertiniſm inſures future felicity; yet many a weak girl, confirmed in this palatable doctrine by examples ſhe has frequently admired of thoſe ſurpriſing reformations ſo conveniently effected in the laſt ſcene of moſt of our comedies, has not ſcrupled to riſk her earthly and eternal happineſs

pineſs with a man, who is not aſhamed to aſcribe to the influence of her beauty that power of changing the heart which he impiouſly denies to Omnipotence itſelf.

As to the laſt of theſe practical aphoriſms, that, "there is no medium in marriage, but "that it is a ſtate of exquiſite happineſs or ex-"quiſite miſery;" this, though not equally ſinful, is equally deluſive: for marriage is only one modification of human life, and human life is not commonly in itſelf a ſtate of exquiſite extremes; but is for the moſt part that mixed and moderate ſtate, ſo naturally dreaded by thoſe who ſet out with fancying this world a ſtate of rapture, and ſo naturally expected by thoſe who know it to be a ſtate of probation and diſcipline. Marriage, therefore, is only one condition, and often the beſt condition, of that imperfect ſtate of being which, though ſeldom very exquiſite, is often very tolerable; and which may yield much comfort to thoſe who do not look for conſtant tranſport. But unfortunately, thoſe who find themſelves diſappointed of the unceaſing raptures they had anticipated in marriage, diſdaining to ſit down with ſo poor a proviſion as comfort, and ſcorning the acceptance of that moderate lot which Providence commonly beſtows with a view to check deſpondency and to repreſs preſumption; give themſelves up to the other alternative; and, by abandoning their hearts to diſcontent, make to themſelves that miſery with which

which their fervid imaginations had filled the oppoſite ſcale.

The truth is, theſe young ladies are very apt to pick up their opinions, leſs from the divines than the poets; and the poets, though it muſt be confeſſed they are ſome of the beſt embelliſhers of life, are not *quite* the ſafeſt conductors through it. In travelling through a wilderneſs, though we avail ourſelves of the harmony of ſinging-birds to render the grove delightful, yet we never think of following them as guides to conduct us through its labyrinths.

Thoſe women, in whom the natural defects of a warm temper have been ſtrengthened by an education which foſters their faults, are very dextrous in availing themſelves of a hint, when it favours a ruling inclination, ſooths vanity, indulges indolence, or gratifies their love of power. They have heard ſo often from their favourite ſentimental authors, and their more flattering male friends, "that when Nature denied them "ſtrength, ſhe gave them faſcinating graces in "compenſation; that their ſtrength conſiſts in "their weakneſs;" and that "they are endowed "with arts of perſuaſion which ſupply the ab-"ſence of force, and the place of reaſon;" that they learn, in time, to pride themſelves on that very weakneſs, and to become vain of their imperfections; till at length they begin to claim for their defects, not only pardon, but admiration. Hence they get to cheriſh a ſpecies of

feeling

feeling which, if not checked, terminates in exceſſive ſelfiſhneſs; they learn to produce their inability to bear contradiction as a proof of their tenderneſs; and to indulge in that ſort of irritability in all that relates to themſelves, which inevitably leads to the utter excluſion of all intereſt in the ſufferings of others. Inſtead of exerciſing their ſenſibility in the wholeſome duty of relieving diſtreſs and viſiting ſcenes of ſorrow, that ſenſibility itſelf is pleaded as a reaſon for their not being able to endure ſights of woe, and for ſhunning the diſtreſs it ſhould be exerted in removing. That exquiſite ſenſe of feeling which God implanted in the heart as a ſtimulus to quicken us in relieving the miſeries of others, is thus introverted, and learns to conſider *ſelf* not as the agent, but the object of compaſſion. Tenderneſs is made an excuſe for being hard-hearted; and inſtead of drying the weeping eyes of others, this falſe delicacy reſerves its ſelfiſh and ready tears for the more elegant and leſs expenſive ſorrows of the melting novel or the pathetic tragedy.

When feeling ſtimulates only to ſelf-indulgence; when the more exquiſite affections of ſympathy and pity evaporate in ſentiment, inſtead of flowing out in active charity, and affording aſſiſtance, protection, or conſolation to every ſpecies of diſtreſs within its reach; it is an evidence that the feeling is of a ſpurious kind; and inſtead of being nouriſhed as an amiable

tenderneſs,

tenderneſs, it ſhould be ſubdued as a fond and baſe ſelf-love.

That idleneſs, to whoſe cruel inroads many women of fortune are unhappily expoſed, from not having been trained to conſider wholeſome occupation, vigorous exertion, and ſyſtematic employment, as making part of the indiſpenſable duties and pleaſures of life, lays them open to a thouſand evils of this kind, from which the uſeful and the buſy are exempted; and, perhaps, it would not be eaſy to find a more pitiable object than a woman with a great deal of time and a great deal of money on her hands, who, never having been taught the conſcientious uſe of either, ſquanders both at random, or rather moulders both away, without plan, without principle, and without pleaſure: all whoſe projects begin and terminate in ſelf; who conſiders the reſt of the world only as they may be ſubſervient to her gratification; and to whom it never occurred, that both her time and money were given for the gratification and good of others.

It is not much to the credit of the other ſex, that they now and then lend themſelves to the indulgence of this ſelfiſh ſpirit in their wives, and cheriſh by a kind of falſe fondneſs thoſe faults which ſhould be combated by good ſenſe and a reaſonable counteraction: ſlothfully preferring a little falſe peace, the purchaſe of precarious quiet, and the popular reputation of good-nature, to the higher duty of forming the mind,

fixing

fixing the principles, and ſtrengthening the character of her with whom they are connected. Perhaps too, a little vanity in the huſband helps out his good nature; he ſecretly rewards himſelf for his ſacrifice by the conſciouſneſs of his ſuperiority; he feels a ſelf-complacency in his patient condeſcenſion to her weakneſs, which tacitly flatters his own ſtrength: and he is, as it were, paid for ſtooping, by the increaſed ſenſe of his own tallneſs. Seeing alſo, perhaps, but little of other women, he is taught to believe that they are all pretty much alike, and that, as a man of ſenſe, he muſt content himſelf with what he takes to be the common lot. Whereas, in truth, by his miſplaced indulgence, he has rather *made* his own lot than *drawn* it; and thus, through an indolent deſpair in the huſband of being able to effect any amendment by oppoſition, and through the want of that ſound affection which labours to improve and exalt the character of its object; it happens, that many a helpleſs, fretful, and daudling wife acquires a more powerful aſcendancy than the moſt diſcreet and amiable woman; and that the moſt abſolute female tyranny is eſtabliſhed by theſe ſickly and capricious humours.

The poets again, who, to do them juſtice, are always ready to lend a helping hand when any miſchief is to be done, have contributed their full ſhare towards confirming theſe feminine follies: they have ſtrengthened by adulatory maxims,

maxims, ſung in ſeducing ſtrains, thoſe faults which their talents and their influence ſhould have been employed in correcting. By fair and youthful females an argument, drawn from ſound experience and real life, is commonly repelled by a ſtanza or a ſonnet; and a couplet is conſidered as nearly of the ſame validity with a text. When ladies are complimented with being

Fine by defect, and delicately weak!

is not a ſtandard of feebleneſs held out to them, to which vanity will gladly reſort, and to which ſoftneſs and indolence can eaſily act up, or rather *act down*, if I may be allowed the expreſſion?

When ladies are told by the ſame miſleading, but to them high, authority, that "ſmiles and "tears are the irreſiſtible arms with which Na-"ture has furniſhed the weak for conquering "the ſtrong," will they not eagerly fly to this cheap and ready artillery, inſtead of labouring to furniſh themſelves with a reaſonable mind, an equable temper, and a meek and quiet ſpirit?

Every animal is endowed by Providence with the peculiar powers adapted to its nature and its wants; while none, except the human, by grafting art on natural ſagacity, injures or mars the gift. Spoilt women, who fancy there is ſomething more *picquant* and alluring in the mutual graces of caprice, than in the monotonous

ſmoothneſs

ſmoothneſs of an even temper; and who alſo having heard much, as was obſerved before, about their "amiable weakneſs," learn to look about them for the beſt ſuccedaneum to ſtrength, the ſuppoſed abſence of which they ſometimes endeavour to ſupply by artifice. By this engine the weakeſt woman frequently furniſhes the converſe to the famous reply of the French miniſter, who, when he was accuſed of governing the mind of that feeble Queen Mary de Medicis by ſorcery, replied, "that the only ſorcery he had "uſed, was that influence which ſtrong minds "naturally have over weak ones."

But though it be fair ſo to ſtudy the tempers, defects, and weakneſſes of others, as to convert our knowledge of them to the promotion of their benefit and our own; and though it be making a lawful uſe of our penetration to avail ourſelves of the faults of others for "their good to edi-"fication;" yet all deviations from the ſtraight line of truth and ſimplicity; every plot inſidiouſly to turn influence to unfair account; all contrivances to extort from a bribed complaiſance what reaſon and juſtice would refuſe to our wiſhes; theſe are ſome of the operations of that loweſt and moſt deſpicable engine, ſelfiſh cunning, by which *little minds ſometimes govern great ones.*

And unluckily, women from their natural deſire to pleaſe, and from their ſometimes doubting by what means this grand end may be beſt effected,

effected, are in more danger of being led into diſſimulation than men; for diſſimulation is the reſult of weakneſs; it is the refuge of doubt and diſtruſt, rather than of conſcious ſtrength, the dangers of which lie another way. Frankneſs, truth, and ſimplicity, therefore, as they are inexpreſſibly charming, ſo are they peculiarly commendable in women, and nobly evince that while the poſſeſſors of them wiſh to pleaſe, (and why ſhould they not wiſh it?) they diſdain to have recourſe to any thing but what is fair, and juſt, and honourable to effect it; that they ſcorn to attain the moſt deſired end by any but the moſt lawful means. The beauty of ſimplicity is indeed ſo intimately felt and generally acknowledged by all who have a true taſte for perſonal, moral, or intellectual beauty, that women of the deepeſt diſſimulation often find their account in aſſuming an exterior the moſt foreign to their character, and exhibiting the moſt engaging *naïveté*. It is curious to ſee the quantity of *art* they put in practice in order to appear *natural*; and the deep *deſign* which is ſet at work to diſplay *ſimplicity*. And indeed this feigned ſimplicity is the moſt miſchievous, becauſe the moſt engaging of all the Proteus forms which Artifice can put on. For the moſt free and bold ſentiments have been ſometimes hazarded with fatal ſucceſs under this unſuſpected maſk. And an innocent, quiet, indolent, artleſs, manner, has been adopted as the moſt refined and ſucceſsful accompaniment

of

of ſentiments, ideas, and deſigns, neither artleſs, quiet, nor innocent.

CHAPTER XVI.

On diſſipation, and the modern habits of faſhionable life.

PERHAPS the intereſts of true friendſhip, elegant converſation, mental improvement, ſocial pleaſure, maternal duty, and conjugal comfort, never received ſuch a blow as when Faſhion iſſued out that arbitrary and univerſal decree, that *every body muſt be acquainted with every body;* together with that conſequent, authoritative, but rather inconvenient clauſe, that *every body muſt alſo go every where every night.* The implicit and devout obedience paid to this law is incompatible with the very being of friendſhip; for as the circle of acquaintance expands, and it will be continually expanding, the affections will be beaten out into ſuch thin lamina as to leave little ſolidity remaining. The heart which is continually exhauſting itſelf in profeſſions grows cold and hard. The feelings of kindneſs diminiſh in proportion as the expreſſion of it becomes

comes more diffuſe and indiſcriminate. The very traces of "ſimplicity and godly ſincerity," in a delicate female, wear away imperceptibly by conſtant colliſion with the world at large. And perhaps no woman takes ſo little intereſt in the happineſs of her real friends, as ſhe whoſe affections are inceſſantly evaporating in univerſal civilities; as ſhe who is ſaying fond and flattering things at random to a circle of five hundred people every night.

The decline and fall of animated and inſtructive converſation has been in a good meaſure effected by this barbarous project of aſſembling *en maſſe*. An excellent prelate*, with whoſe friendſhip the author was long honoured, and who himſelf excelled in the art of converſation, uſed to remark, that a few years had brought about a great revolution in the manners of ſociety; that it uſed to be the cuſtom, previouſly to going into company, to think that ſomething was to be communicated or received, taught or learnt; that the powers of the underſtanding were expected to be brought into exerciſe, and that it was therefore neceſſary to quicken the mind, by reading and thinking, for the ſhare the individual might be expected to take in the general diſcourſe; but that now, knowledge, and taſte, and wit, and erudition, ſeemed to be ſcarcely conſidered as neceſſary materials to be brought into the pleaſurable commerce of the world; becauſe now there was little chance of

* The late Biſhop Horne.

turning them to much account; and therefore he who poſſeſſed them, and he who poſſeſſed them not, were nearly on a footing.

It is obvious alſo that multitudinous aſſemblies are ſo little favourable to that *cheerfulneſs* which it ſhould ſeem to be their very end to promote, that if there were any chemical proceſs by which the quantum of ſpirits animal or intellectual could be aſcertained, the diminution would be found to have been inconceivably great, ſince the transformation of man and woman from a ſocial to a gregarious animal.

But if it be true that friendſhip, ſociety, and cheerfulneſs, have ſuſtained ſo much injury by this change of manners, how much more pointedly does the remark apply to family happineſs!

Notwithſtanding the known fluctuation of manners and the mutability of language, could it be foreſeen, when the Apoſtle Paul exhorted "married women to be keepers *at home*," that the time would arrive when that very phraſe would be ſelected to deſignate one of the moſt decided acts of diſſipation? Could it be foreſeen that when a fine lady ſhould ſend out a notification that on ſuch a night ſhe ſhall be AT HOME, theſe two ſignificant words (beſides intimating the rarity of the thing) would preſent to the mind an image the moſt *undomeſtic* which language can convey? Could it be anticipated that the event of the lady's being *at home* could only be

be effected by the univerſal concurrence of all her acquaintance to be abroad? That ſo ſimple an act ſhould require ſuch complicated co-operation? And that the report that one perſon would be found in her own houſe ſhould operate with ſuch an electric force as to empty the houſes of all her friends?

My country readers, who may require to have it explained that theſe two magnetic words *at home*, now poſſeſs the powerful influence of drawing together every thing *fine* within the ſphere of their attraction, may need alſo to be apprized, that the gueſts afterwards are not aſked what was *ſaid* by the company, but whether the *crowd* was prodigious; the rule for deciding on the merit of a faſhionable ſociety not being by the taſte or the ſpirit, but by the *ſcore* and the *hundred*. The queſtion of pleaſure, like a parliamentary queſtion, is now carried by numbers. And when two parties modiſh, like two parties political, are run one againſt another on the ſame night, the ſame kind of mortification attends the leader of a defeated minority, the ſame triumph attends the exulting carrier of ſuperior numbers, in the one caſe as in the other. The ſcale of enjoyment is rated by the meaſure of fatigue, and the quantity of inconvenience furniſhes the ſtandard of gratification: the ſmallneſs of the dimenſions to which each perſon is limited on account of the multitudes which muſt divide among them a certain given ſpace, adds

to the ſum total of general delight; the aggregate of pleaſure is produced by the proportion of individual ſuffering; and not till every gueſt feels herſelf in the ſtate of a cat in an exhauſted receiver, does the delighted hoſteſs attain the conſummation of that renown which is derived from ſuch overflowing rooms as ſhall throw all her competitors at a diſgraceful diſtance.

An eminent divine has ſaid, that either "perſeverance in prayer will make a man leave off "ſinning, or a continuance in ſin will make him "leave off prayer." This remark may be accommodated to thoſe ladies who, while they are devoted to the enjoyments of the world, yet retain conſiderable ſolicitude for the inſtruction of their daughters. But if they are really in earneſt to give them a Chriſtian education, they muſt themſelves renounce a diſſipated life. Or if they reſolve to purſue the chace of pleaſure, they muſt renounce this prime duty. Contraries cannot unite. The moral nurture of a tall daughter can no more be adminiſtered by a mother whoſe time is abſorbed by crowds abroad, than the phyſical nurture of her infant offſpring can be ſupplied by her in a perpetual abſence from home. And is not that a prepoſterous affection, which, after leading a mother to devote a few months to the inferior duty of furniſhing aliment to the mere animal life, allows her to deſert her poſt when the more important moral

and

and intellectual cravings require ſuſtenance? This great object is not to be effected with the ſhreds and parings rounded off from the circle of a diſſipated life; but in order to its adequate execution, the mother ſhould carry it on with the ſame ſpirit and perſeverance at home, which the father thinks it neceſſary to be exerting abroad in his public duty or profeſſional engagements.

The uſual vindication (and in theory it has a plauſible ſound) which has been offered for the large portion of time ſpent by women in acquiring ornamental talents is, that they are calculated to make the poſſeſſor love home, and that they innocently fill up the hours of leiſure. The plea has indeed ſo promiſing an appearance, that it is worth inquiring whether it be in fact true. Do we then, on fairly purſuing the inquiry, diſcover that thoſe who have ſpent moſt time in ſuch light acquiſitions, are really remarkable for loving home or ſtaying quietly there? or that when there, they are ſedulous in turning time to the beſt account? I ſpeak not of that rational and reſpectable claſs of women, who, applying (as many of them do) theſe elegant talents to their true purpoſe, employ them to fill up the vacancies of better occupations, and to embelliſh the leiſure of a life actively good. But do we *generally* ſee that even the moſt valuable and ſober part of the reigning female acquiſitions leads their poſſeſſor to ſcenes moſt favourable

to

to the enjoyment of them? to ſcenes which we ſhould naturally ſuppoſe ſhe would ſeek, in order to the more effectual cultivation of ſuch rational pleaſures?

Would not thoſe delightful purſuits, botany and drawing, for inſtance, ſeem likely to court the fields, the woods, and gardens of the paternal ſeat, as more congenial to their nature, and more appropriate to their exerciſe, than barren watering places, deſtitute of a tree, or an herb, or a flower, and not affording an hour's interval from ſucceſſive pleaſures, to profit by the ſcene even if it abounded with the whole vegetable world, from the "Cedar of Lebanon to "the Hyſſop on the wall."

From the mention of watering places, may the author be allowed to ſuggeſt a few remarks on the evils which have ariſen from the general conſpiracy of the gay to uſurp the regions of the ſick; and from their converting the health-reſtoring fountains, meant as a refuge for diſeaſe, into the reſorts of vanity for thoſe who have no diſeaſe but idleneſs?

This inability of ſtaying at home, as it is one of the moſt infallible, ſo it is one of the moſt dangerous ſymptoms of the reigning mania. It would be more tolerable, did this epidemic malady only break out, as formerly, during the winter, or ſome one ſeaſon. Heretofore, the tenantry and the poor, the natural dependants on the rural manſions of the opulent, had ſome definite

definite period to which they might joyfully look forward for the approach of thoſe patrons, part of whoſe buſineſs in life it is to influence by their preſence, to inſtruct by their example, to ſoothe by their kindneſs, and to aſſiſt by their liberality, thoſe whom Providence, in the diſtribution of human lots, has placed under their more immediate protection. Though it would be far from truth to aſſert, that diſſipated people are never charitable, yet I will venture to ſay, that diſſipation is inconſiſtent with the *ſpirit* of charity. That affecting precept followed by ſo gracious a promiſe, "Never turn away thy face from any "poor man, and then the face of the Lord ſhall "never be turned away from thee," cannot literally mean that we ſhould *give* to all, as then we ſhould ſoon have nothing left to give: but it ſeems to intimate the habitual attention, the duty of inquiring out all caſes of diſtreſs, in order to judge which are fit to be relieved; now for this inquiry, for this attention, for this ſympathy, the diſſipated have little taſte, and leſs leiſure.

Let a reaſonable conjecture (for calculation would fail!) be made of how large a diminution of the general good has been effected in this ſingle reſpect, by cauſes which, though they do not ſeem important in themſelves, yet make no inconſiderable part of the miſchief ariſing from modern manners: and I ſpeak now to perſons who *intend* to be charitable. What a deduction will

will be made from the aggregate of charity, by a circumſtance apparently trifling, when we conſider what would be the beneficial effects of that regular bounty which muſt almoſt unavoidably reſult from the evening walks of a great and benevolent family among the cottages of their own domain: the thouſand little acts of, comparatively, unexpenſive kindneſs which the *ſight* of petty wants and difficulties would excite; wants, which will ſcarcely be felt in the relation; and which will probably be neither ſeen, nor felt, nor fairly repreſented, in their long abſences, by an agent. And what is even almoſt more than the good done, is the habit of mind kept up in thoſe who do it. Would not this habit, exerciſed on the Chriſtian principle, that "even a cup of cold water," given upon *right motives*, ſhall not loſe its reward; while the giving "all their goods to feed the poor," without the true *principle* of charity, ſhall profit them nothing; would not this habit, I ſay, and the inculcation of the ſpirit which produces it, be almoſt the beſt part of the education of daughters*?

* It would be a pleaſant ſummer amuſement for our young ladies of fortune, if they were to preſide at ſuch ſpinning feaſts as are inſtituted at Nuneham for the promotion of virtue and induſtry in their own ſex. Pleaſurable anniverſaries of this kind would ſerve to combine in the minds of the poor two ideas which ought never to be ſeparated; but which *they* are not very forward to unite,—that the great wiſh to make them *happy* as well as good.

Occaſiona

But tranſplant this wealthy and bountiful family periodically to the frivolous and unintereſting buſtle of the watering place; there it is not denied that frequent public and faſhionable acts of charity may make a part (and it is well they do) of the buſineſs and amuſement of the day; with this latter, indeed, they are ſometimes good-naturedly mixed up. But how ſhall we compare the regular ſyſtematical good theſe perſons would be doing at their own home, with the light, and amuſing, and buſtling bounties of the public place? The illegal raffle at the toy-ſhop, may relieve, it is true, ſome diſtreſs; but this diſtreſs, though it may be real, and if real it ought to be relieved, is far leſs eaſily aſcertained than the wants of the poor round a perſon's own neighbourhood, or the debts of a diſtreſſed tenant. How ſhall we compare the broad ſtream of bounty which ſhould be flowing through, and refreſhing whole diſtricts, with the penurious current of the ſubſcription breakfaſt for the needy muſician, in which the price of the gift is taken out in the diverſion, and in which plea-

Occaſional approximations of the rich and poor, for the purpoſes of relief and inſtruction, and annual meetings for the purpoſe of innocent pleaſure, would do much towards wearing away diſcontent; and the conviction that the rich really take an intereſt in their comfort, would contribute to reconcile the lower claſs to that ſtate in which it has pleaſed God to place them.

ſure dignifies itſelf with the name of bounty? How ſhall we compare the attention, and time, and zeal, which would otherwiſe, perhaps, be devoted to the village-ſchool, ſpent in hawking about benefit tickets for a broken player, while the kindneſs of the benefactreſs, perhaps, is rewarded by ſcenes in which her charity is not always repaid by the purity of the exhibition?

Far be it from the author to wiſh to check the full tide of charity wherever it is diſpoſed to flow! Would ſhe could multiply the already abundant ſtreams, and behold every ſource purified! But in the public reſorts there are many who are able and willing to give. In the ſequeſtered, though populous village, there is, perhaps, only one affluent family: the diſtreſs which they do not *behold* will probably not be attended to; the diſtreſs which *they* do not relieve will probably not be relieved at all: the wrongs which *they* do not redreſs will go unredreſſed: the oppreſſed whom *they* do not reſcue will ſink under the tyranny of the oppreſſor. Through their own rural domains too, charity runs in a clearer current, and is under leſs ſuſpicion of being polluted by that muddy tincture which it is ſometimes apt to contract in paſſing through the impure ſoil of the world.

But to return from this too long digreſſion. The old ſtanding objection formerly brought forward by the prejudices of the other ſex, and

too

too eagerly laid hold on as a ſhelter for indolence and ignorance by ours, was, that intellectual accompliſhments too much abſorbed the thoughts and affections, took women off from the neceſſary attention to domeſtic duties, and ſuperinduced a contempt or neglect of whatever was uſeful.—But it is peculiarly the character of the preſent day to detect abſurd opinions, and expoſe plauſible theories by the ſimple and deciſive anſwer of experiment; and it is preſumed that this popular error, as well as others, is daily receiving the refutation of actual experience. For it cannot ſurely be maintained on ground that is any longer tenable, that acquirements truly rational are calculated to draw off the mind from real duties. Whatever removes prejudices, whatever ſtimulates induſtry, whatever rectifies the judgment, whatwhatever corrects ſelf-conceit, whatever purifies the taſte, and raiſes the underſtanding, will be likely to contribute to moral excellence: to woman moral excellence is the grand object of education; and of moral excellence, domeſtic life is to woman the proper ſphere.

Count over the liſt of females who have made ſhipwreck of their fame and virtue, and have furniſhed the moſt lamentable examples of the dereliction of family duties; and the number will not be found conſiderable who have been led aſtray by the purſuit of knowledge. And if a few deplorable inſtances of this kind be produced, it will commonly be found that there

was

was little infuſion in the minds of ſuch women of that correcting principle without which all other knowledge only "puffeth up."

The time nightly expended in late female vigils is expended by the light of far other lamps than thoſe which are fed by the ſtudent's oil; and if families *are* to be found who are neglected through too much ſtudy in the miſtreſs, it will probably be proved to be Hoyle, and not Homer, who has robbed her children of her time and affections. For one family which has been neglected by the mother's paſſion for books, an hundred have been deſerted through her paſſion for play. The huſband of a faſhionable woman will not often find that the library is the apartment the expences of which involve him in debt or diſgrace. And for one literary ſlattern, who now manifeſts her indifference to her huſband by the neglect of her perſon, there are ſcores of elegant ſpendthrifts who ruin theirs by exceſs of decoration.

May I digreſs a little while I remark, that I am far from aſſerting that literature has never filled women with vanity and ſelf-conceit; the contrary is too obvious: and it happens in this as in other caſes, that a few characters conſpicuouſly abſurd, have ſerved to bring a whole order or body into ridicule. But I will aſſert, that in general thoſe whom books are ſuppoſed to have ſpoiled, would have been ſpoiled in another way without them. She who is a vain pedant

becauſe

becauſe ſhe has read much, has probably that defect in her mind which would have made her a vain fool if ſhe had read nothing. It is not her having more knowledge, but leſs ſenſe, which makes her inſufferable: and ignorance would have added little to her value, for it is not what ſhe has, but what ſhe wants, which makes her unpleaſant. The truth, however, probably lies here, that while her underſtanding was improved, the tempers of her heart were neglected, and that in cultivating the fame of a *ſavante*, ſhe loſt the humility of a Chriſtian. But theſe inſtances too furniſh only a freſh argument for the *general* cultivation of the female mind. The wider diffuſion of ſound knowledge, would remove that temptation to be vain which may be excited by its rarity.

But while we would aſſert that a woman of a cultivated intellect is not driven by the ſame neceſſity as others into the giddy whirl of public reſort; who but regrets that real cultivation does not *inevitably* preſerve her from it? No wonder that inanity of character, that vacuity of mind, that torpid ignorance, ſhould plunge into diſſipation as their natural refuge; ſhould ſeek to bury their inſignificance in the crowd of preſſing multitudes, and hope to eſcape analyſis and detection in the undiſtinguiſhed maſſes of mixed aſſemblies! *There* attrition rubs all bodies ſmooth, and makes all ſurfaces alike; thither ſuperficial and external

accompliſhments

accompliſhments naturally fly as to their proper ſcene of action; as to a field where competition in *ſuch* perfections is in perpetual exerciſe; where the laurels of admiration are to be won; whence the trophies of vanity may be carried off triumphantly.

It would indeed be matter of little comparative regret, if this corrupt air were breathed only by thoſe whoſe natural element it ſeems to be; but who can forbear lamenting that the power of faſhion attracts into this impure and unwholeſome atmoſphere, minds alſo of a better make, of higher aims and ends, of more ethereal temper? that it attracts even thoſe who, renouncing enjoyments for which they have a genuine taſte, and which would make them really happy, neglect ſociety they love and purſuits they admire, in order that they may *ſeem* happy and *be* faſhionable in the chace of pleaſures they deſpiſe, and in company they diſapprove! But no correctneſs of taſte, no depth of knowledge, will infallibly preſerve a woman from this contagion, unleſs her heart be impreſſed with a deep Chriſtian conviction that ſhe is accountable for the application of knowledge as well as for the dedication of time. Perhaps if there be any one principle which ſhould be more ſeduloufly than another worked into the youthful mind, it is the doctrine of particular as well as general reſponſibility.

The

The contagion of diſſipated manners is ſo deep, ſo wide, and fatal, that if I were called upon to aſſign the predominant cauſe of the greater part of the misfortunes and corruptions of the great and gay in our days, I ſhould not look for it principally in any obviouſly great or ſtriking circumſtance; not in the practice of notorious vices, not originally in the dereliction of Chriſtian principle; but I ſhould without heſitation aſcribe it to a growing, regular, ſyſtematic ſeries of amuſements; to an inceſſant, boundleſs, and not very diſreputable DISSIPATION. Other corruptions, though more formidable in appearance, are yet leſs fatal in ſome reſpects, becauſe they leave us intervals to reflect on their turpitude, and ſpirit to lament their exceſſes; but diſſipation is the more hopeleſs, as by engroſſing almoſt the entire life, and enervating the whole moral and intellectual ſyſtem, it leaves neither time for reflection, nor ſpace for ſelf-examination, nor temper for the cheriſhing of right affections, nor leiſure for the operation of ſound principles, nor interval for regret, nor vigour to reſiſt temptation, nor energy to ſtruggle for amendment.

The great maſter of the ſcience of pleaſure among the ancients, who reduced it into a ſyſtem, which he called *the chief good of man*, directed that there ſhould be interval enough between the ſucceſſion of delights to ſharpen inclination; and accordingly inſtituted periodical days

days of abſtinence; well knowing that gratifi-cation was beſt promoted by previous ſelf-denial. But ſo little do our votaries of faſhion under-ſtand the true nature of pleaſure, that one amuſement is allowed to overtake another with-out any interval, either for recollection of the paſt or preparation for the future. Even on their own ſelfiſh principle, therefore, nothing can be worſe underſtood than this continuity of enjoy-ment: for to ſuch a degree of labour is the pur-ſuit carried, that the pleaſures exhauſt inſtead of exhilarating, and the recreations require to be reſted from.

For, not to argue the queſtion on the ground of religion, but merely on that of preſent enjoy-ment; look abroad and ſee who are the people that complain of wearineſs, liſtleſſneſs, and de-jection. You will not find them among the claſs of ſuch as are overdone with work, but with pleaſure. The natural and healthful fa-tigues of buſineſs may be recruited by ſimple and cheap gratifications; but a ſpirit worn down with the toils of amuſement, requires pleaſures of poignancy; varied, multiplied, ſtimulating!

It has been obſerved by medical writers, that that ſober exceſs in which many indulge, by eating and drinking a little too much at every day's dinner and every night's ſupper, more ef-fectually undermines the health, than thoſe more rare exceſſes by which others now and then break in upon a life of general ſobriety. This

illuſtration

illuſtration is not introduced with a deſign to recommend occaſional deviations into groſs vice, by way of a pious receipt for mending the morals; but merely to ſuggeſt that there is a probability that thoſe who are ſometimes driven by unreſiſted paſſion into irregularities which ſhock their cooler reaſon, are more liable to be rouſed to a ſenſe of their danger, than perſons whoſe perceptions of evil are blunted through a round of ſyſtematical, unceaſing, and yet not ſcandalous diſſipation. And when I affirm that this ſyſtem of regular indulgence relaxes the ſoul, enſlaves the heart, bewitches the ſenſes, and thus diſqualifies for pious thought or uſeful action, without having any thing in it ſo groſs as to ſhock the conſcience; and when I hazard an opinion that this ſtate is more formidable, becauſe leſs alarming, than that which bears upon it a more determined character of evil, I no more mean to ſpeak of the latter in ſlight and palliating terms, than I would intimate, becauſe the ſick ſometimes recover from a fever, but ſeldom from a palſy, that a fever is therefore a ſafe or a healthy ſtate.

But there ſeems to be an error in the firſt concoction, out of which the ſubſequent errors ſucceſſively grow. Firſt then, as has been obſerved before, the ſhowy education of women tends chiefly to qualify them for the glare of public aſſemblies; ſecondly, they ſeem in many inſtances to be ſo educated, with a view to the greater

greater probability of their being ſplendidly married; thirdly, it is alleged in vindication of thoſe diſſipated practices, that daughters can only be ſeen, and admirers procured at balls, operas, and aſſemblies: and that therefore, by a natural and neceſſary conſequence, balls, operas, and aſſemblies muſt be followed up without intermiſſion till the object be effected. For the accompliſhment of this object it is that all this complicated machinery had been previouſly ſet a-going, and kept in motion with an activity not at all ſlackened by the diſordered ſtate of the ſyſtem; for ſome machines, inſtead of being ſtopped, go faſter becauſe the true ſpring is out of order; the only difference being that they go wrong, and ſo the encreaſed rapidity adds only to the quantity of error.

It is alſo, as we have already remarked, an error to fancy that the love of pleaſure exhauſts itſelf by indulgence, and that the very young are chiefly addicted to it. The contrary appears to be true. The deſire often grows with the purſuit in the ſame degree as motion is quickened by the continuance of the gravitating force.

Firſt then, it cannot be thought unfair to trace back the exceſſive fondneſs for amuſement to that mode of education we have elſewhere reprobated. Few of the accompliſhments falſely ſo called, aſſiſt the developement of the faculties: they do not exerciſe the judgment, nor bring into action thoſe powers which fit the heart

heart and mind for the occupations of life; they do not prepare women to love home, to underſtand its occupations, to enliven its uniformity, to fulfil its duties, to multiply its comforts: they do not lead to that ſort of experimental logic, if I may ſo ſpeak, compounded of obſervation and reflection, which makes up the moral ſcience of life and manners. Talents which have *diſplay* for their object deſpiſe the narrow ſtage of home: they demand mankind for their ſpectators, and the world for their theatre.

While one cannot help ſhrinking a little from the idea of a delicate young creature, lovely in perſon, and engaging in mind and manners, ſacrificing nightly at the public ſhrine of Faſhion, at once the votary and the victim; one cannot help figuring to oneſelf how much more intereſting ſhe would appear in the eyes of a man of feeling, did he behold her in the more endearing ſituations of domeſtic life. And who can forbear wiſhing, that the good ſenſe, good taſte, and delicacy of the men had rather led them to prefer ſeeking companions for life in the almoſt ſacred quiet of a virtuous home? *There* they might have had the means of ſeeing and admiring thoſe amiable beings in the beſt point of view: *there* they might have been enabled to form a juſter eſtimate of female worth, than is likely to be obtained in ſcenes where ſuch qualities and talents as might be expected to add to the ſtock of domeſtic comfort muſt neceſſarily be

be kept in the back ground, and where ſuch only *can* be brought into view as are not particularly calculated to inſure the certainty of home delights.

O! did they keep their perſons freſh and new,
How would they pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
And win by rareneſs!

But by what unaccountable infatuation is it that men too, even men of ſenſe, join in the confederacy againſt their own happineſs, by looking for their home companions in the reſorts of vanity? Why do not ſuch men riſe ſuperior to the illuſions of faſhion? Why do they not uniformly ſeek her who is to preſide in *their* families in the boſom of her own? in the practice of every domeſtic duty, in the exerciſe of every amiable virtue, in the exertion of every elegant accompliſhment? thoſe accompliſhments of which we have been reprobating, not the poſſeſſion, but the application? *there* they would find her exerting them to their true end, to enliven buſineſs, to animate retirement, to embelliſh the charming ſcene of family delights, to heighten the intereſting pleaſures of ſocial intercourſe, and, riſing in juſt gradation to their nobleſt object, to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour.

If, indeed, woman were mere outſide, form and face only, and if *mind* made up no part of her compoſition, it would follow that a ball-room

was

was quite as appropriate a place for chooſing a wife, as an exhibition room for chooſing a picture. But, inaſmuch as women are not mere portraits, their value not being determinable by a glance of the eye, it follows that a different mode of appreciating their value, and a different place for viewing them antecedent to their being individually ſelected, is deſirable. The two caſes differ alſo in this, that if a man ſelect a picture for himſelf from among all its exhibited competitors, and bring it to his own houſe, the picture being paſſive, he is able to *fix* it there: while the wife, picked up at a public place, and accuſtomed to inceſſant diſplay, will not, it is probable, when brought home, ſtick ſo quietly to the ſpot where he fixes her; but will eſcape to the exhibition-room again, and continue to be diſplayed at every ſubſequent exhibition, juſt as if ſhe were not become private property, and had never been definitively diſpoſed of.

It is the novelty of a thing which aſtoniſhes us, and not its abſurdity: objects may be ſo long kept before the eye that it begins no longer to obſerve them; or may be brought into ſuch cloſe contact with it, that it does not diſcern them. Long habit ſo reconciles us to almoſt any thing, that the groſſeſt improprieties ceaſe to ſtrike us when they once make a part of the common courſe of action. This, by the way, is a ſtrong reaſon for carefully ſifting every opinion and every practice before we let them incorporate

corporate into the maſs of our habits, for after that time they will be no more examined.—Would it not be accounted prepoſterous for a young man to ſay he had fancied ſuch a lady would dance a better minuet becauſe he had ſeen her behave devoutly at Church, and *therefore* had choſen her for his partner? and yet he is not thought at all abſurd when he intimates that he choſe a partner for life becauſe he was pleaſed with her at a ball. Surely the place of chooſing and the motive of choice, would be juſt as appropriate in one caſe as in the other, and the miſtake, if the judgment failed, not *quite* ſo ſerious.

There is, among the more elevated claſſes of ſociety, a certain ſet of perſons who are pleaſed excluſively to call themſelves, and whom others by a ſort of compelled courteſy are pleaſed to call, *the fine world.* This ſmall detachment conſider their ſituation with reſpect to the reſt of mankind, juſt as the ancient Grecians did theirs; that is, as the Grecians thought there were but two ſorts of beings, and that all who were not Grecians were barbarians; ſo this *certain ſet* conceives of ſociety as reſolving itſelf into two diſtinct claſſes, the *fine world* and the *people;* to which laſt claſs they turn over all who do not belong to their little *coterie,* however high their rank, or fortune, or merit. Celebrity, in their eſtimation, is not beſtowed by birth or talents, but by being connected with *them.* They have laws,

laws, immunities, privileges, and almoſt a language of their own; they form a kind of diſtinct *caſt*, and with a ſort of *eſprit du corps* detach themſelves from others, even in general ſociety, by an affectation of diſtance and coldneſs; and only whiſper and ſmile in their own little groups of the initiated; their confines are jealouſly guarded, and their privileges are incommunicable.

In this ſociety a young man loſes his natural character, which, whatever it might have been originally, is melted down and caſt into the one prevailing mould of Faſhion; all the ſtrong, native, diſcriminating qualities of his mind being made to take one ſhape, one ſtamp, one ſuperſcription! However varied and diſtinct might have been the materials which nature threw into the crucible, plaſtic Faſhion takes care that they ſhall all be the ſame, or at leaſt appear the ſame, when they come out of the mould. A young man in ſuch an artificial ſtate of ſociety, accuſtomed to the voluptuous eaſe, refined luxuries, ſoft accommodations, obſequious attendance, and all the unreſtrained indulgencies of a faſhionable club, is not to be expected after marriage to take very cordially to a home, unleſs very extraordinary exertions are made to amuſe, to attach, and to intereſt him: and he is not likely to lend a very helping hand to the happineſs of the union, whoſe moſt laborious exertions have hitherto been little more than

than a ſelfiſh ſtratagem to reconcile health with pleaſure. Exceſs of gratification has only ſerved to make him irritable and exacting; it will of courſe be no part of his project to make ſacrifices, he will expect to receive them: and what would appear incredible to the *Paladins* of gallant times, and the *Chevaliers Preux* of more heroic days, even in the neceſſary buſineſs of eſtabliſhing himſelf for life, he ſometimes is more diſpoſed to expect attentions than to make advances.

Thus the indolent ſon of faſhion, with a thouſand fine, but dormant qualities, which a bad tone of manners forbids him to bring into exerciſe; with real energies which that tone does not allow him to diſcover, and an unreal apathy which it commands him to feign: with the heart of an hero, perhaps, if called into the field, affects at home the manners of a Sybarite; and he who, with a Roman or what is more, with a Britiſh valour, would leap into the gulph at the call of public duty,

Yet in the ſoft and piping time of peace,

when faſhion has reſumed her rights, would murmur if a roſe leaf lay double under him.

The clubs above alluded to, as has been ſaid, generate and cheriſh luxurious habits, from their perfect eaſe, undreſs, liberty, and inattentions to the diſtinctions of rank: they promote a love of

of play, and in ſhort, every temper and ſpirit which tends to *undomeſticate*; and what adds to the miſchief is, all this is attained at a cheap rate, compared with what may be procured at home in the ſame ſtyle.

Theſe indulgencies, and this habit of mind, gratify ſo many paſſions, that a woman can never hope ſucceſsfully to counteract the evil by ſupplying at home gratifications which are *of the ſame kind*, or which gratify the *ſame* habits. Now a paſſion for gratifying vanity, and a ſpirit of diſſipation *is* a paſſion of the ſame kind; and therefore, though for a few weeks, a man who has choſen his wife in the public haunts, and this wife a woman made up of *accompliſhments*, may, from the novelty of the connexion and of the ſcene, continue domeſtic; yet in a little time ſhe will find that thoſe paſſions, to which ſhe has truſted for making pleaſant the married life of her huſband, will crave the ſtill higher pleaſures of the club; and while theſe are purſued, ſhe will be conſigned over to ſolitary evenings at home, or driven back to the old diſſipations.

To conquer the paſſion for club gratifications, a woman muſt not ſtrive to feed it with ſufficient aliment of the ſame kind in her ſociety, either at home or abroad; ſhe muſt ſupplant and overcome it by a paſſion of a different nature, which Providence has kindly planted within us; I mean, by inſpiring him with the love of fireſide enjoyments. But to qualify herſelf for adminiſ-

tering theſe, ſhe muſt cultivate her underſtanding, and her heart, and her temper, acquiring at the ſame time that modicum of accompliſhments ſuited to his taſte, which may qualify her for poſſeſſing, both for him and for herſelf, greater varieties of ſafe recreation.

One great cauſe of the want of attachment in theſe modiſh couples is, that by living in the world at large, they are not driven to depend on each other as the chief ſource of comfort. Now it is pretty clear, in ſpite of modern theories, that the very frame and being of ſocieties, whether great or ſmall, public or private, is jointed and glued together by dependence. Thoſe attachments, which ariſe from, and are compacted by, a ſenſe of mutual wants, mutual affection, mutual benefit, and mutual obligation, are the cement which ſecure the union of the family as well as of the ſtate.

Unfortunately, when two young perſons of the above deſcription marry, the union is ſometimes conſidered rather as the end than the beginning of an engagement: the attachment of each to the other is rather viewed as an object already completed, than as one which marriage is to confirm more cloſely. But the companion for life is not always choſen from the pureſt motive; ſhe is ſelected, perhaps, becauſe ſhe is admired by other men, rather than becauſe ſhe poſſeſſes in an eminent degree thoſe peculiar qualities which are likely to conſtitute the individual happineſs

happineſs of the man who chooſes her. Vanity uſurps the place of affection; and indolence ſwallows up the judgment. Not happineſs, but ſome eaſy ſubſtitute for happineſs, is purſued; and a choice which may excite envy, rather than produce ſatisfaction, is adopted as the means of effecting it.

The pair, not *matched but joined*, ſet out ſeparately with their independent and individual purſuits. Whether it made a part of their original plan or not, that they ſhould be indiſpenſably neceſſary to each other's comfort, the ſenſe of this neceſſity, probably not very ſtrong at firſt, rather diminiſhes than increaſes by time; they live ſo much in the world, and ſo little together, that to ſtand well with their *own ſet* continues the favourite project of each; while to ſtand well with each other is conſidered as an under-part of the plot in the drama of life. Whereas, did they ſtart in the conjugal race with the fixed idea that they were to look to each other for their chief worldly happineſs, not only principle, but prudence, and even ſelfiſhneſs, would convince them of the neceſſity of ſeduloufly cultivating each other's eſteem and affection as the grand means of promoting that happineſs. But vanity, and the deſire of flattery and applauſe, ſtill continue to operate. Even after the huſband is brought to feel a perfect indifference for his wife, he ſtill likes to ſee her decorated in a ſtyle which may ſerve to juſtify

his choice. He encourages her to ſet off her perſon, not ſo much for his own gratification, as that his ſelf-love may be flattered, by her continuing to attract the admiration of thoſe whoſe opinion is the ſtandard by which he meaſures his fame, and which fame is to ſtand him in the ſtead of happineſs. Thus is ſhe neceſſarily expoſed to the two-fold temptation of being at once neglected by her huſband, and exhibited as an object of attraction to other men. If ſhe eſcape this complicated danger, ſhe will be indebted for her preſervation not to his prudence, but to her own principles.

In ſome of theſe modiſh marriages, inſtead of the decorous neatneſs, the pleaſant intercourſe, and the mutual warmth of communication of the once ſocial dinner; the late and unintereſting meal is commonly hurried over by the languid and ſlovenly pair, that the one may have time to dreſs for his club, and the other for her party. And in theſe cold abſtracted *têtes-à-têtes*, they often take as little pains to entertain each other, as if the one was preciſely the only human being in the world in whoſe eyes the other did not feel it neceſſary to appear agreeable.

But if theſe young and perhaps really amiable perſons could ſtruggle againſt the imperious tyranny of faſhion, and contrive to paſs a little time together, ſo as to get acquainted with each other; and if each would live in the lively and conſcientious exerciſe of thoſe talents and attractions

tractions which they ſometimes know how to produce on occaſions not *quite* ſo juſtifiable; they would, I am perſuaded, often find out each other to be very agreeable people. And both of them, delighted and delighting, receiving and beſtowing happineſs, would no longer be driven to the neceſſity of perpetually eſcaping from home as from the only ſcene which offers no poſſible materials for pleaſure. The ſteady and growing attachment, improved by unbounded confidence and mutual interchange of ſentiments; judgment ripening, and experience ſtrengthening that eſteem which taſte and inclination firſt inſpired; each party ſtudying to promote the eternal as well as temporal happineſs of the other; each correcting the errors, improving the principles, and confirming the faith of the beloved object: this would enrich the feeling heart with gratifications which the inſolvent world has not to beſtow: ſuch an heart would compare its intereſting domeſtic ſcenes with the vapid pleaſures of public reſort, till it would fly to its own home, not from neceſſity, but taſte; not from cuſtom, but choice; not from duty, but delight.

It may ſeem a contradiction to have aſſerted, that beings of all ages, tempers, and talents, ſhould with ſuch unremitting induſtry follow up any way of life, if they did not find ſome enjoyment in it: yet I appeal to the boſoms of theſe inceſſant hunters in the chace of pleaſure, whether

whether they are really happy. No:—in the full tide and torrent of diverſion, in the full blaze of gaiety,

The heart, diſtruſting, aſks if this be joy?

But there is an anxious reſtleſsneſs excited by the purſuit, which, if not intereſting, is buſtling. There is the dread, and partly the diſcredit, of being ſuſpected of having one hour unmortaged, not only to ſucceſſive, but contending engagements; this it is, and not the pleaſure of the engagement itſelf, which is the object. There is an agitation in the arrangements which impoſes itſelf on the vacant heart for happineſs. There is a tumult kept up in the ſpirits which is a buſy though treacherous ſubſtitute for comfort. The multiplicity of ſolicitations ſoothes vanity. The very regret that they cannot be all accepted has its charms; for dignity is flattered becauſe refuſal implies importance, and pre-engagement intimates celebrity. Then there is the joy of being invited when others are neglected; the triumph of ſhewing one's leſs modiſh friend that one is going where ſhe cannot come; and the feigned regret at being *obliged* to go, aſſumed before her who is half wild at being obliged to ſtay away. Theſe are ſome of the ſupplemental ſhifts for happineſs with which vanity contrives to feed her hungry followers, too eager to be nice.

In

In the ſucceſſion of open houſes, in which pleaſure is to be ſtarted and purſued on any given night, the actual place is never taken into the account of enjoyment: the ſcene of which is always ſuppoſed to lie in any place where her votaries happen not to be. Pleaſure has no preſent tenſe: but in the houſe which her purſuers have juſt quitted, and in the houſe to which they are juſt haſtening, a ſtranger might conclude the ſlippery goddeſs had really fixed her throne, and that her worſhippers conſidered the exiſting ſcene, which they ſeem compelled to ſuffer, but from which they are eager to eſcape, as really detaining them from ſome poſitive joy to which they are flying in the next crowd; till, if he met them there, he would find the component parts of each preciſely the ſame. He would hear the ſame ſtated phraſes interrupted, not anſwered, by the ſame ſtated replies; the unfiniſhed ſentence "driven adverſe to the winds," by preſſing multitudes; the ſame warm regret mutually exchanged by two *friends* (who had been expreſsly denied to each other all the winter) that they had not met before; the ſame ſoft and ſmiling ſorrow at being *torn away* from each other now; the ſame avowed anxiety to renew the meeting, with perhaps the ſame ſecret reſolution to avoid it. He would hear deſcribed with the ſame pathetic earneſtneſs the difficulties of getting into this houſe, and the dangers of getting out of the laſt! the perilous retreat of former nights,

nights, effected amidſt the ſhock of chariots, and the clang of contending coachmen! a retreat indeed effected with a ſkill and peril little inferior to that of the *ten thouſand*, and detailed with far juſter triumph: for that which happened only once in a life to the Grecian hero, occurs to theſe Britiſh heroines every night. There is one point of reſemblance, indeed, between them in which the compariſon fails; for the commander, with a *mauvaiſe honte* at which a true female veteran would bluſh, is remarkable for never naming himſelf.

With "myſterious reverence" I forbear to deſcant on thoſe ſerious and intereſting rites, for the more auguſt and ſolemn celebration of which Faſhion nightly convenes theſe ſplendid myriads to her more ſumptuous temples. Rites! which, when engaged in with due devotion, abſorb the whole ſoul, and call every paſſion into exerciſe, except indeed thoſe of love, and peace, and kindneſs, and gentleneſs. Inſpiring rites! which ſtimulate fear, rouſe hope, kindle zeal, quicken dulneſs, ſharpen diſcernment, exerciſe memory, inflame curioſity! Rites! in ſhort, in the due performance of which all the energies and attentions, all the powers and abilities, all the abſtraction and exertion, all the diligence and devotedneſs, all the ſacrifice of time, all the contempt of eaſe, all the neglect of ſleep, all the oblivion of care, all the riſks of fortune (half of which, if directed to their true objects, would

would change the very face of the world): all theſe are concentrated to one point; a point in which the wiſe and the weak, the learned and the ignorant, the fair and the frightful, the ſprightly and the dull, the rich and the poor, the patrician and plebeian, meet in one common and uniform equality; an equality as religiouſly reſpected in theſe ſolemnities, in which all diſtinctions are levelled at a blow, and of which the very ſpirit is therefore democratical, as it is combated in all other inſtances.

Behold four Kings in majeſty rever'd,
With hoary whiſkers and a forked beard;
And four fair Queens, whoſe hands ſuſtain a flow'r,
Th' expreſſive emblem of their ſofter pow'r;
Four Knaves in garbs ſuccinct, a truſty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And party-colour'd troops, a ſhining train,
Drawn forth to combat on the velvet plain*.

* Rape of the Lock.

CHAPTER XVII.

On public amuſements.

IT is not propoſed to enter the long conteſted field of controverſy as to the individual amuſements which may be conſidered as ſafe and lawful for thoſe women of the higher claſs who make a ſtrict profeſſion of Chriſtianity. The judgment they will be likely to form for themſelves on the ſubject, and the plan they will conſequently adopt, will depend much on the clearneſs or obſcurity of their religious views, and on the greater or leſs progreſs they have made in their Chriſtian courſe. It is in their choice of amuſements that you are able, in ſome meaſure, to get acquainted with the real diſpoſitions of mankind. In their *buſineſs*, in the leading employments of life, their path is in a good degree chalked out for them: there is in this reſpect a ſort of general character, wherein the greater part, more or leſs, muſt coincide. But in their pleaſures the choice is voluntary, the taſte is ſelf-directed, the propenſity is independent; and of courſe the habitual ſtate, the genuine bent and bias of the temper, are moſt likely to be ſeen in thoſe purſuits which every perſon is at liberty to chooſe for himſelf.

When

When a truly religious principle ſhall have acquired ſuch a degree of force as to produce that conſcientious and habitual improvement of time before recommended, it will diſcover itſelf by an increaſing indifference and even deadneſs to thoſe pleaſures which are intereſting to the world at large. A woman under the predominating influence of ſuch a principle, will begin to diſcover that the ſame thing which in itſelf is innocent may yet be comparatively wrong. She will begin to feel that there are many amuſements and employments which, though they have nothing cenſurable in themſelves, yet if they be allowed to intrench on hours which ought to be dedicated to ſtill better purpoſes; or if they are protracted to an undue length; or above all, if by ſoftening and relaxing her mind and diſſipating her ſpirits, they ſo indiſpoſe her for better purſuits as to render ſubſequent duties a burden, they become in that caſe clearly wrong for her, whatever they may be for others. Now as temptations of this ſort are the peculiar dangers of better kind of characters, the ſacrifice of ſuch little gratifications as may *have no great harm in them*, come in among the daily calls to ſelf-denial in a Chriſtian.

The fine arts, for inſtance, polite literature, elegant ſociety, theſe are among the lawful, and liberal, and becoming recreations of higher life; yet if even theſe be cultivated to the neglect or excluſion of ſeverer duties; if they interfere with

with ſerious ſtudies, or diſqualify the mind for religious exerciſes, it is an intimation that they have been too much indulged; and, under ſuch circumſtances, it might be the part of Chriſtian circumſpection to inquire if the time devoted to them ought not to be abridged. Above all, a tender conſcience will never loſe ſight of one ſafe rule of determining in all doubtful caſes: if the point be ſo nice that though we hope upon the whole there *may* be no harm in engaging in it, we may at leaſt be always quite ſure that there *can* be no harm in letting it alone. The adoption of this ſimple rule would put a period to much unprofitable caſuiſtry.

The principle of being reſponſible for the uſe of time once fixed in the mind, the conſcientious Chriſtian will be making a continual progreſs in the great art of turning time to account. In the firſt ſtages of her religion ſhe will have abſtained from pleaſures which began a *little* to wound the conſcience, or which aſſumed a queſtionable ſhape; but ſhe will probably have abſtained with regret, and with a ſecret wiſh that conſcience *could* have permitted her to keep well with pleaſure and religion too. But you may diſcern in her ſubſequent courſe that ſhe has reached a more advanced ſtage, by her beginning to neglect even ſuch pleaſures or employments as have no moral turpitude in them, but are merely what are called innocent. This relinquiſhment ariſes, not ſo much from her feeling

ſtill

ſtill more the reſtraints of religion, as from the improvement in her religious taſte. Pleaſures cannot now attach her merely from their being innocent, unleſs they are intereſting alſo, and to be intereſting they muſt be conſonant to her ſuperinduced views. She is not contented to ſpend a large portion of her time harmleſsly, it muſt be ſpent profitably alſo. Nay, if ſhe be indeed earneſtly "preſſing towards the mark," it will not be even enough for her that her preſent purſuit be good, if ſhe be convinced that it might be ſtill better. Her contempt of ordinary enjoyments will increaſe in a direct proportion to her increaſed reliſh for thoſe pleaſures which religion enjoins and beſtows. So that at length if it were poſſible to ſuppoſe that an angel could come down to take off as it were the interdict, and to invite her to reſume all the pleaſures ſhe had renounced, and to reſume them with complete impunity, ſhe would reject the invitation, becauſe, from an improvement in her ſpiritual taſte, ſhe would deſpiſe thoſe delights from which ſhe had at firſt abſtained through fear. Till her will and affections come heartily to be engaged in the ſervice of God, the progreſs will not be comfortable; but when once they are ſo engaged, the attachment to this ſervice will be cordial, and her heart will not deſire to go back and toil again in the drudgery of the world. For her religion has not ſo much given her a new creed, as a new heart, and a new life.

As

As her views are become new, ſo her tempers, diſpoſitions, taſtes, actions, purſuits, choice of company, choice of amuſements, are new alſo; her employment of time is changed; her turn of converſation is altered; "old things are "paſſed away, all things are become new." In diſſipated and worldly ſociety, ſhe will ſeldom fail to feel a ſort of uneaſineſs, which will produce one of theſe two effects; ſhe will either, as proper ſeaſons preſent themſelves, ſtruggle hard to introduce ſuch ſubjects as may be uſeful to others; or, ſuppoſing that ſhe finds herſelf unable to effect this, ſhe will, as far as ſhe prudently can, abſent herſelf from all unprofitable kind of ſociety. Indeed her manner of conducting herſelf under theſe circumſtances may ſerve to furniſh her with a teſt of her own ſincerity. For while people are contending for a little more of this amuſement, and pleading for a little extenſion of that gratification, and fighting in order that they may hedge in a little more territory to their pleaſu- ground, they are exhibiting a kind of evidence againſt themſelves, that they are not yet "renewed in the ſpirit of their mind."

It has been warmly urged as an objection to certain religious books, and particularly againſt a recent work of high worth and celebrity, by a diſtinguiſhed layman*, that they have ſet the ſtandard of ſelf-denial higher than reaſon or even than Chriſtianity requires. Theſe works do indeed

* Practical View, &c. by Mr. Wilberforce.

deed elevate the general tone of religion to a higher pitch than is quite convenient to thoſe who are at infinite pains to conſtruct a comfortable and comprehenſive plan, which ſhall unite the queſtionable pleaſures of this world with the promiſed happineſs of the next. I ſay it has been ſometimes objected, even by thoſe readers who on the whole greatly admire the particular work alluded to, that it is unreaſonably ſtrict in the preceptive and prohibitory parts; and eſpecially that it individually and ſpecifically forbids certain faſhionable amuſements, with a ſeverity not to be found in the ſcriptures; and is ſcrupulouſly rigid in condemning diverſions againſt which nothing is ſaid in the New Teſtament: each objector, however, is ſo far reaſonable, as only to beg quarter for her own favourite diverſion, and generouſly abandons the defence of thoſe in which ſhe herſelf has no particular pleaſure.

But theſe objectors do not ſeem to underſtand the true genius of Chriſtianity. They do not conſider that it is the character of the Goſpel to exhibit a ſcheme of principles, of which it is the tendency to infuſe ſuch a ſpirit of holineſs as muſt be utterly incompatible, not only with cuſtoms decidedly vicious, but with the very ſpirit of worldly pleaſure. They do not conſider that Chriſtianity is neither a table of ethics, nor a ſyſtem of opinions, nor a bundle of rods to puniſh, nor an exhibition of rewards to allure, nor

nor a ſcheme of reſtraints to terrify, nor merely a code of laws to reſtrict; but it is a new principle infuſed into the heart by the word and the ſpirit of God, out of which principle will inevitably grow right opinions, renewed affections, correct morals, pure deſires, heavenly tempers, and holy habits, with an invariable deſire of pleaſing God, and a conſtant fear of offending him. A real Chriſtian, whoſe heart is once thoroughly imbued with this principle, can no more return to the amuſements of the world, than a philoſopher can be refreſhed with the diverſions of the vulgar, or a man be amuſed with the recreations of a child. The New Teſtament is not a mere ſtatute-book: it is not a table where every offence is detailed, and its correſponding penalty annexed: it is not ſo much a *compilation*, as a *ſpirit* of laws: it does not ſo much prohibit every individual wrong practice, as ſuggeſt a temper and implant a general principle with which every wrong practice is incompatible. It did not, for inſtance, ſo much attack the then reigning and corrupt faſhions, which were probably, like the faſhions of other countries, temporary and local, as it ſtruck at that worldlineſs, which is the root and ſtock from which all corrupt faſhions proceed.

The prophet Iſaiah, who addreſſed himſelf more particularly to the Iſraelitiſh women, inveighed not only againſt vanity, luxury, and immodeſty, in general; but with great propriety

priety cenſured even thoſe preciſe inſtances of each, to which the women of rank in the particular country he was addreſſing were eſpecially addicted; nay, he enters into the minute detail* of their very perſonal decorations, and brings ſpecific charges againſt ſeveral inſtances of their levity and extravagance of apparel; meaning, however, chiefly to cenſure the turn of character which theſe indicated. But the Goſpel of Chriſt, which was to be addreſſed to all ages, ſtations, and countries, ſeldom contains any ſuch detailed animadverſions; for though many of the cenſurable modes which the prophet ſo ſeverely reprobated, continued probably to be ſtill prevalent in Jeruſalem in the days of our Saviour, yet how little would it have ſuited the univerſality of his miſſion, to have confined his preaching to ſuch local, limited, and fluctuating cuſtoms! not but that there are many texts which actually *do* define the Chriſtian conduct as well as temper, with ſufficient particularity to ſerve as a condemnation of many practices which are pleaded for, and often to point pretty directly at them†.

Had

* Iſaiah, chap. iii.

† By the way, it would be well for thoſe modiſh Chriſtians who vindicate exceſſive vanity in dreſs, expence, and decoration, on the principle of their being mere matters of indifference, and no where prohibited in the Goſpel, to conſider that ſuch practices ſtrongly mark the temper and

Had Peter, on that memorable day when he added three thouſand converts to the Church by a ſingle ſermon, narrowed his ſubject to a remonſtrance againſt this diverſion, or that public place, or the other vain amuſement, it might indeed have ſuited the caſe of ſome of the female Jewiſh converts who were preſent; but ſuch reſtrictions as might have been appropriate to *them*, would probably not have applied to the caſes of the Parthians and Medes, of which his audience was partly compoſed; or ſuch as might have belonged to them would have been totally inapplicable to the Cretes and Arabians; or again, thoſe which ſuited theſe would not have applied to the Elamites and Meſopotamians. By ſuch partial and circumſcribed addreſſes, his multifarious audience, compoſed of all nations and countries, would not have been, as we are told they were, "pricked to the heart." But when he preached on the broad ground of general "repentance and remiſſion of ſins in the "name of Jeſus Chriſt," it was no wonder that they all cried out, "What ſhall we do?" Theſe collected foreigners, at their return home, muſt have found very different uſages to be corrected in their different countries; of courſe a detailed

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and ſpirit with which they are connected, and in that view are ſo little creditable to the Chriſtian profeſſion, as to furniſh a juſt ſubject of ſuſpicion againſt the piety of thoſe who indulge in them.

detailed reſtriction of the popular abuſes at Jeruſalem, would have been of little uſe to ſtrangers returning to their reſpective nations. The ardent Apoſtle, therefore, acted more conſiſtently in communicating to them the large and comprehenſive ſpirit of the Goſpel, which ſhould at once involve all their ſcattered and ſeparate duties, as well as reprove all their ſcattered and ſeparate corruptions: for the whole always includes a part, and the greater involves the leſs. Chriſt and his diſciples, inſtead of limiting their condemnation to the peculiar vanities reprehended by Iſaiah, embraced the very ſoul and principle of them all, in ſuch exhortations as the following: "Be ye not confirmed to the world:" —"If any man love the world, the love of the "Father is not in him:"—"The faſhion of this "world paſſeth away." Our Lord and his Apoſtles, whoſe future unſelected audience was to be made up out of the various inhabitants of the whole world, attacked the evil *heart*, out of which all thoſe incidental, local, peculiar, and popular corruptions proceeded.

In the time of Chriſt and his immediate followers, the luxury and intemperance of the Romans had ariſen to a pitch before unknown in the world; but as the ſame Goſpel which its Divine Author and his diſciples were then preaching to the hungry and neceſſitous, was afterwards to be preached to high and low, not excepting the Roman emperors themſelves; the large precept, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do,

"do

" do all to the glory of God," was likely to be of more general uſe, than any ſeparate exhortation to temperance, to thankfulneſs, to moderation as to quantity or expence; which laſt indeed muſt always be left in ſome degree to the judgment and circumſtances of the individual.

When the Apoſtle of the Gentiles viſited the " Saints of Cæſar's houſhold," he could hardly fail to have heard, nor could he have heard without abhorrence, of ſome of the faſhionable amuſements in the court of Nero. He muſt have reflected with peculiar indignation on many things which were practiſed in the Circenſian games: yet, inſtead of pruning this corrupt tree, and ſingling out even the inhuman gladiatorial ſports for the object of his condemnation, he laid his axe to the root of all corruption, by preaching to them that Goſpel of Chriſt of which " he was not aſhamed;" and ſhewing to them that believed, that " it " was the power of God and the wiſdom of " God." Of this Goſpel the great object was, to attack not one popular evil, but the whole body of ſin. Now the doctrine of Chriſt crucified was the moſt appropriate means for deſtroying this; for by what other means could the fervid imagination of the Apoſtle have ſo powerfully inforced the heinouſneſs of ſin, as by inſiſting on the coſtlineſs of the ſacrifice which was offered for its expiation? It is ſomewhat remarkable, that about the very time of his preaching to the Romans, the public taſte had ſunk to ſuch

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an excess of depravity, that the very women engaged in those shocking encounters with the gladiators.

But, in the first place, it was better that the right practice of his hearers should grow out of the right principle; and next, his specifically reprobating these diversions might have had this ill effect, that succeeding ages, seeing that they in their amusements came somewhat short of those dreadful excesses of the polished Romans, would only have plumed themselves on their own comparative superiority; and, on this principle, even the bull-fights of Madrid might in time have had their panegyrists. The truth is, the Apostle knew that such abominable corruptions could never subsist together with Christianity, and, in fact, the honour of abolishing these barbarous diversions, was reserved for Constantine, the first Christian emperor.

Besides, the Apostles, by inveighing against some *particular* diversions, might have seemed to sanction all which they did not actually censure: and as, in the lapse of time and the revolution of governments, customs change and manners fluctuate; had a minute reprehension of the fashions of the then existing age been published in the New Testament, that portion of scripture must in time have become obsolete, even in that very same country, when the fashions themselves should have changed. Paul and his brother Apostles knew that their epistles would be

be the oracles of the Chriſtian world, when theſe temporary diverſions would be forgotten. In conſequence of this knowledge, by the univerſal precept to avoid "the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt "of the eye, and the pride of life," they have prepared a laſting antidote againſt the *principle* of all corrupt pleaſures, which will ever remain equally applicable to the looſe faſhions of all ages and of every country to the end of the world.

Therefore, to vindicate diverſions which are in themſelves unchriſtian, on the pretended ground that they are not ſpecifically condemned in the Goſpel, would be little leſs abſurd than if the heroes of Newmarket ſhould bring it as a proof that their periodical meetings are not condemned in Scripture, becauſe St. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, did not ſpeak againſt theſe diverſions; and that in availing himſelf of the Iſthmian games, as a happy illuſtration of the Chriſtian race, he did not drop any cenſure on the practice itſelf: a practice which was indeed as much more pure than the races of Chriſtian Britain, as the moderation of being contented with the triumph of a crown of leaves, is ſuperior to that criminal ſpirit of gambling which iniquitouſly enriches the victor by beggaring the competitor.

Local abuſes, as we have ſaid, were not the object of a book whoſe inſtructions were to be

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of univerſal and laſting application. As a proof of this, little is ſaid in the Goſpel of the then prevailing corruption of polygamy; nothing againſt the ſavage cuſtom of expoſing children, or even againſt ſlavery; nothing expreſsly againſt ſuicide or duelling; the laſt Gothic cuſtom, indeed, did not exiſt among the crimes of *Paganiſm*. But is there not an implied prohibition againſt polygamy in the general denunciation againſt adultery? Is not expoſing of children condemned in that charge againſt the Romans, that "they were without natural affection?" Is there not a ſtrong cenſure againſt ſlavery conveyed in the command to "do unto others as you "would have them do unto you?" and againſt ſuicide and duelling, in the general prohibition againſt murder, which is ſtrongly enforced and affectingly amplified by the ſolemn manner in which murder is traced back to its firſt ſeed of anger, in the ſermon on the mount?

Thus it is clear, that when Chriſt ſent the Goſpel to all nations, he meant that that Goſpel ſhould proclaim thoſe prime truths, general laws, and fundamental doctrines, which muſt neceſſarily involve the prohibition of all individual, local, and inferior errors; errors which could not have been ſpecifically guarded againſt, without having a diſtinct Goſpel for every country, or without ſwelling the divine volume into ſuch inconvenient length as would have defeated one great

great end of its promulgation*. And while its leading principles are of univerſal application, it muſt always, in ſome meaſure, be left to the diſcretion of the preacher, and to the conſcience of the hearer, to examine whether the life and habits of thoſe who profeſs it are conformable to its main ſpirit and deſign.

The ſame Divine Spirit which indited the Holy Scriptures, is promiſed to purify the hearts and renew the natures of repenting and believing Chriſtians; and the compoſitions it inſpired are in ſome degree analogous to the workmanſhip it effects. It prohibited the vicious practices of the apoſtolical days, by prohibiting the paſſions and principles which rendered them gratifying; and ſtill working in like manner on the hearts of real Chriſtians, it corrects the taſt which was accuſtomed to find its proper gratification in the reſorts of vanity; and thus effectually provides for the reformation of the habits, and infuſes a reliſh for rational and domeſtic enjoyments, and for whatever can adminiſter pleaſure to that ſpirit of peace, and love, and hope, and joy, which animates and rules the renewed heart of the true Chriſtian.

But there is a portion of Scripture which, though to a ſuperficial reader it may ſeem but very remotely connected with the preſent ſubject, yet, to readers of another caſt, ſeems to ſettle

* "To the *poor* the Goſpel is preached." Luke, vii. 22.

ſettle the matter beyond controverſy. In the parable of the great ſupper, this important truth is held out to us, that even things *good in themſelves* may be the means of our eternal ruin, by drawing our hearts from God, and cauſing us to make light of the offers of the Goſpel. One invited gueſt had bought an eſtate, another had made a purchaſe equally blameleſs of oxen, a third had married a wife, an act not illaudable in itſelf. They had all different reaſons, none of which appeared to have any moral turpitude; but they all agreed in this, *to decline the invitation to ſupper*. The worldly poſſeſſions of one, the worldly buſineſs of another, and what ſhould be particularly attended to, the love to his deareſt relative, of a third, (a love, by the way, not only allowed but commanded in Scripture,) were brought forward as excuſes for not attending to the important buſineſs of religion. The conſequence, however, was the ſame to all. "None of thoſe which were bidden ſhall taſte "of my ſupper." If then things *innocent*, things *neceſſary*, things *laudable*, things *commanded*, become ſinful, when by unſeaſonable or exceſſive indulgence they detain the heart and affections from God, how vain will all theſe arguments neceſſarily be rendered, which are urged by the advocates for certain amuſements, on the ground of their *harmleſſneſs*; if thoſe amuſements ſerve not to mention any poſitive evil which may be-

long to them) in like manner to draw away the thoughts and affections from all ſpiritual objects!

To conclude; when this topic happens to become the ſubject of converſation, inſtead of addreſſing ſevere and pointed attacks to young ladies on the ſin of attending places of diverſion, would it not be better firſt to endeavour to excite in them that principle of Chriſtianity, with which ſuch diverſions ſeem not quite compatible; as the phyſician, who viſits a patient in an eruptive fever, pays little attention to thoſe ſpots which to the ignorant appear to be the diſeaſe, except indeed ſo far as they ſerve as indications to let him into its nature, but goes ſtraight to the root of the malady? He attacks the fever, he lowers the pulſe, he changes the ſyſtem, he corrects the general habit; well knowing that if he can but reſtore the vital principle of health, the ſpots, which were nothing but ſymptoms, will die away of themſelves.

In inſtructing others, we ſhould imitate our Lord and his Apoſtles, and not always aim our blow at each particular corruption; but making it our buſineſs to convince our pupil that what brings forth the evil fruit ſhe exhibits, cannot be a branch of the true vine; we ſhould thus avail ourſelves of individual corruptions, for impreſſing her with a ſenſe of the neceſſity of purifying

ing the common ſource from which they flow—a corrupt nature. Thus making it our grand buſineſs to rectify the heart, we purſue the true, the compendious, the only method of univerſal holineſs.

I would, however, take leave of thoſe amiable and not ill-diſpoſed young perſons, who complain of the rigour of human prohibitions, and declare, "they meet with no ſuch ſtrictneſs in the Goſpel," by aſking them, with the moſt affectionate earneſtneſs, if they can conſcientiouſly reconcile their nightly attendance at every public place which they frequent, with ſuch precepts as the following: "Redeeming the "time:"—"Watch and pray:"—"Watch, for "ye know not at what time your Lord cometh:"—"Abſtain from all *appearance* of evil:"—"Set your affections on things above:"—"Be "ye ſpiritually minded:"—"Crucify the fleſh "with its affections and luſts?" And I would venture to offer one criterion, by which the perſons in queſtion may be enabled to decide on the poſitive innocence and ſafety of ſuch diverſions; I mean, provided they are ſincere in their ſcrutiny and honeſt in their avowal. If, on their return at night from thoſe places, they find they can retire, and "commune with their own "hearts;" if they find the love of God operating with undiminiſhed force on their minds; if they can "bring every thought into ſubjection," and concentrate every wandering imagination;

if they can ſoberly examine into their own ſtate of mind:—I do not ſay if they can do all this perfectly and without diſtraction; (for who can do this at any time?) but if they can do it with the ſame *degree* of ſerioufneſs, pray with the ſame *degree* of fervour, and renounce the world in as great a *meaſure* as at other times; and if they can lie down with a peaceful conſciouſneſs of having avoided in the evening, "that temp-"tation" which they had prayed not to be "led into" in the morning, they may then more reaſonably hope that all is well, and that they are not ſpeaking falſe peace to their hearts. If this teſt were fairly uſed; if this experiment were honeſtly tried; if this examination were conſcientiouſly made, may we not without offence preſume to aſk—*Could* our numerous places of public reſort, *could* our ever-multiplying ſcenes of more ſelect but not leſs dangerous diverſion, nightly overflow with an exceſs hitherto unparalleled in the annals of pleaſure*?

* If I might preſume to recommend a book which of all others expoſes the inſignificance, vanity, littleneſs, and emptineſs of the world, I ſhould not heſitate to name Mr. Law's "*Serious Call to a devout and holy Life.*" Few writers, except Paſcal, have directed ſo much acuteneſs of reaſoning and ſo much pointed wit to this object. He not only makes the reader afraid of a worldly life on account of its ſinfulneſs, but aſhamed of it on account of its folly. Few men perhaps have had a deeper inſight into the human heart, or have more ſkilfully probed its corruptions: yet on points of doctrine his views do not ſeem

ſeem to be juſt; and his diſquiſitions are often unſound and fanciful, ſo that a *general* peruſal of his works would neither be profitable or intelligible. To a faſhionable woman immerſed in the vanities of life, or to a buſy man overwhelmed with its cares, I know no book ſo applicable, or likely to exhibit with equal force the vanity of the ſhadows they are purſuing. But, even in this work, he is not a ſafe guide to evangelical light; and, in many of his others, he is highly viſionary and whimſical: and I have known ſome excellent perſons who were firſt led by this admirable genius to ſee the wants of their own hearts, and the utter inſufficiency of the world to fill up the craving void, who, though they became eminent for piety and ſelf-denial, have had their uſefulneſs abridged, and whoſe minds have contracted ſomething of a monaſtic ſeverity, by an unqualified peruſal of Mr. Law. True Chriſtianity does not call on us to ſtarve our bodies, but our corruptions. As the *mortified Apoſtle of the holy and ſelf-denying Baptiſt*, preaching repentance becauſe the kingdom of Heaven is at hand, Mr. Law has no ſuperior. As a preacher of ſalvation on ſcriptual grounds, I would follow other guides.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A worldly ſpirit incompatible with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity.

IS it not whimſical to hear ſuch complaints againſt the ſtrictneſs of religion as we are frequently hearing, from beings who are voluntarily purſuing, as has been ſhewn in the preceding Chapters, a courſe of life which faſhion makes infinitely more ſevere? How really burdenſome would Chriſtianity be if ſhe enjoined ſuch ſedulous application, ſuch unremitting labours, ſuch a ſucceſſion of fatigues! If religion commanded ſuch hardſhips and ſelf-denial, ſuch days of hurry, ſuch evenings of exertion, ſuch nights of broken reſt, ſuch perpetual ſacrifices of quiet, ſuch exile from family delights, as faſhion impoſes, then indeed the ſervice of Chriſtianity would no longer merit its preſent appellation of being a "*reaſonable* ſervice;" then the name of perfect ſlavery might be juſtly applied to that which we are told in the beautiful language of our church, is "a ſervice of perfect freedom:" a ſervice, the great object of which is "to de-"liver us from the bondage of corruption into "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

A worldly

A worldly temper, by which I mean a diſpoſition to prefer worldly pleaſures, worldly ſatisfactions, and worldly advantages, to the immortal intereſts of the ſoul; and to let worldly conſiderations actuate us inſtead of the dictates of religion in the concerns of ordinary life; a worldly temper, I ſay, is not, like almoſt any other fault, the effect of paſſion or the conſequence of ſurpriſe when the heart is off its guard. It is not excited incidentally by the operation of external circumſtances on the infirmity of nature; but it is the vital ſpirit, the eſſential ſoul, the living principle of evil. It is not ſo much an act, as a ſtate of being; not ſo much an occaſional complaint, as a tainted conſtitution of mind. If it do not always ſhow itſelf in extraordinary exceſſes, it has no perfect intermiſſion. Even when it is not immediately tempted to break out into overt and ſpecific acts, it is at work within, ſtirring up the heart to diſaffection againſt holineſs, and infuſing a kind of moral diſability to whatever is intrinſically right. It infects and depraves all the powers and faculties of the ſoul; for it operates on the underſtanding by blinding it to whatever is ſpiritually good; on the will, by making it averſe from God; on the affections, by diſordering and ſenſualizing them; ſo that one may almoſt ſay to thoſe who are under the ſupreme dominion of this ſpirit, what was ſaid to the hoſts of Joſhua, "Ye *cannot* ſerve the Lord."

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This worldlineſs of mind is not at all commonly underſtood, and for the following reaſon: —People ſuppoſe that in this world our chief buſineſs is with the things of this world, and that to conduct the buſineſs of this world well, that is, conformably to moral principles, is the chief ſubſtance of moral and true goodneſs. Religion, if introduced at all into the ſyſtem, only makes its occaſional, and if I may ſo ſpeak, its holiday appearance. To bring religion into every thing, is thought incompatible with the due attention to the things of this life. And ſo it would be, if by religion were meant *talking* about religion. The phraſe, therefore, is: "One cannot always be praying; we muſt mind our buſineſs "and our ſocial duties as well as our devotion." Worldly buſineſs being thus ſubjected to worldly, though in ſome degree moral, maxims, the mind during the conduct of buſineſs grows worldly; and a continually increaſing worldly ſpirit dims the ſight and relaxes the moral principle on which the affairs of the world are conducted, as well as indiſpoſes the mind for all the exerciſes of devotion.

But this temper, as far as relates to *buſineſs*, ſo much aſſumes the ſemblance of goodneſs, that thoſe who have not right views are apt to miſtake the carrying on the affairs of life on a tolerably moral principle, for religion. They do not ſee that the evil lies not in their ſo carrying on buſineſs, but in their not carrying on the things

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of this life in ſubſerviency to the things of eternity; in their not carrying them on with the unintermitting idea of reſponſibility. The evil does not lie in their not being always on their knees, but in their not bringing their religion from the cloſet into the world: in their not bringing the ſpirit of the Sunday's devotions into the tranſactions of the week: in not transforming their religion from a dry, and ſpeculative, and inoperative ſyſtem, into a lively, and influential, and unceaſing principle of action.

Though there are, bleſſed be God! in the moſt exalted ſtations, women who adorn their Chriſtian profeſſion by a conſiſtent conduct; yet are there not others who are labouring hard to unite the irreconcileable intereſts of earth and heaven? who, while they will not relinquiſh one jot of what *this* world has to beſtow, yet by no means renounce their hopes of a better? who do not think it unreaſonable that their indulging in the fulleſt poſſeſſion of preſent pleaſure ſhould interfere with the moſt certain reverſion of future glory? who, after living in the moſt unbounded gratification of eaſe, vanity, and luxury, fancy that heaven muſt be attached of courſe to a life of which Chriſtianity is the outward profeſſion, and which has not been ſtained by any flagrant or diſhonourable act of guilt?

Are there not many who, while they entertain a reſpect for religion, (for I addreſs not the unbelieving or the licentious,) while they believe

its truths, obſerve its forms, and would be ſhocked not to be thought religious, are yet immerſed in this life of diſqualifying worldlineſs? who, though they make a conſcience of going to the public worſhip once on a Sunday, and are ſcrupulouſly obſervant of the other rites of the Church, yet heſitate not to give up all the reſt of their time to the very ſame purſuits and pleaſures which occupy the hearts and engroſs the lives of thoſe looſer characters whoſe enjoyment is not obſtructed by any dread of a future account? and who are acting on the wiſe principle of "the children of this world," in making the moſt of the preſent ſtate of being, from the conviction that there is no other to be expected?

It muſt be owned, indeed, that faith in unſeen things is at times ſadly weak and defective even in the truly pious; and that it is ſo, is the ſubject of their grief and humiliation. O! how does the real Chriſtian take ſhame in the coldneſs of his belief, in the lowneſs of his attainments! How deeply does he lament that "when "he would do good, evil is preſent with him!" —"that the life he now lives in the fleſh, is" not, in the degree it ought to be, "by faith in "the Son of God!" Yet one thing is clear; however weak his belief may ſeem to be, it is evident that his actions are mainly governed by it; he evinces his ſincerity to others by a life in ſome good degree analogous to the doctrines he profeſſes: while to himſelf he has at leaſt this

conviction

conviction, that faint as his confidence may be at times, low as may be his hope, and feeble as his faith may ſeem, yet at the worſt of times he would not exchange that faint meaſure of truſt and hope for all the actual pleaſures and poſſeſſions of his moſt ſplendid acquaintance; and what is a proof of his ſincerity, he never ſeeks the cure of his dejection, where they ſeek theirs, in the world, but in God.

But as to the faith of worldly perſons, however ſtrong it may be in ſpeculation, however orthodox their creed, however ſtout their profeſſion, one cannot help fearing that it is a little defective in ſincerity: for if there were in the mind a full perſuaſion of the truth of revelation, and of the eternal bliſs it promiſes, would it not be obvious to them that there muſt be more diligence for its attainment? We diſcover great ardour in carrying on worldly projects, becauſe we believe the good which we are purſuing is real, and will reward the trouble of the purſuit; we believe that good is to be obtained by diligence, and we prudently proportion our earneſtneſs to this conviction; when therefore we ſee perſons profeſſing a lively faith in a better world, yet labouring little to obtain an intereſt in it, can we forbear ſuſpecting that their belief, not only of their own title to eternal happineſs, but of eternal happineſs itſelf, is not well grounded? and that, if they were to "examine themſelves truly," and to produce the principle of ſuch a relaxed

relaxed morality, the faith would be found to be much of a piece with the practice?

Even that very ſpirit of enjoyment which leads the perſons in queſtion ſo ſtudiouſly to poſſeſs themſelves of the qualifications neceſſary for the pleaſures of the preſent ſcene; that underſtanding and good ſenſe, which leads them to acquire ſuch talents as may enable them to reliſh the reſorts of gaiety here; that very ſpirit ſhould induce thoſe who are really looking for a future ſtate of happineſs, to wiſh to acquire ſomething of the taſte, and temper, and talents, which may be conſidered as qualifications for the enjoyment of that happineſs. The neglect to do this muſt proceed from one of theſe two cauſes; either they muſt think their preſent courſe a ſafe and proper courſe; or they muſt think that death is to produce ſome ſudden and ſurpriſing alteration in the human character. But the office of death is to tranſport us to a new ſtate, not to transform us to a new nature; the ſtroke of death is intended to effect our deliverance out of this world, and our introduction into another; but it is not likely to effect any ſudden and wonderful or total change in our hearts or our taſtes: ſo far from this, that we are aſſured in Scripture, "that he that is filthy will be "filthy ſtill, and he that is holy will be holy "ſtill." Though we believe that death will completely cleanſe the holy ſoul from its remaining pollutions, that it will exchange defective

fective ſanctification into perfect purity, entangling temptation into complete freedom, want and pain into health and fruition, doubts and fears into perfect ſecurity, and oppreſſive wearineſs into everlaſting reſt; yet there is no magic in the wand of death which will convert an unholy ſoul into a holy one. And it is awful to reflect, that ſuch tempers as have the allowed predominance here will maintain it for ever; that ſuch as the will is when we cloſe our eyes upon the things of time, ſuch it will be when we open them on thoſe of eternity. The mere act of death no more fits us for heaven, than the mere act of the maſon who pulls down our old houſe fits us for a new one. If we die with our hearts running over with the love of the world, there is no promiſe to lead us to expect that we ſhall riſe with them full of the love of God. Death indeed will ſhew us to ourſelves ſuch as we are, but will not make us ſuch as we are not: and it will be too late to be acquiring ſelf-knowledge when we can no longer turn it to any account but that of tormenting ourſelves. To illuſtrate this truth ſtill farther by an alluſion familiar to the perſons I addreſs: the drawing up the curtain at the theatre, though it ſerve to introduce us to the entertainments behind it, does not create in us any new faculties to underſtand or to reliſh thoſe entertainments: theſe muſt have been long in acquiring; they muſt have been provided beforehand, and brought with us

to

to the place, if we would reliſh the pleaſures of it; for the entertainment can only operate on that taſte we carry to it. It is too late to be acquiring when we ought to be enjoying.

That ſpirit of prayer and praiſe, thoſe diſpoſitions of love, meekneſs, "peace, quietneſs, "and aſſurance;" that indifference to the faſhion of a world which is paſſing away; that longing after deliverance from ſin, that deſire of holineſs, together with all the ſpecific marks of our having "the fruits of the ſpirit" here, muſt ſurely make ſome part of our qualification for the enjoyment of a world, the pleaſures of which are all ſpiritual. And who can conceive any thing comparable to the awful ſurpriſe of a ſoul long immerſed in the indulgences of vanity and pleaſure, yet all the while lulled by the ſelf-complacency of a religion of mere forms; who, while it counted upon heaven as a thing of courſe, had made no preparation for it! Who can conceive any ſurpriſe comparable to that of ſuch a ſoul on ſhutting its eyes on a world of ſenſe, of which all the objects and delights were ſo congenial to its nature, and opening them on a world of ſpirits of which all the characters of enjoyment are of a nature new, unknown, ſurpriſing, and ſpecifically different? pleaſures more inconceivable to its apprehenſion and more unſuitable to its taſte, than the gratifications of one ſenſe are to the organs

organs of another, or than the moſt exquiſite works of art and genius to abſolute imbecility of mind.

While we would with deep humility confeſs that we cannot purchaſe heaven by any works or right diſpoſitions of our own; while we gratefully acknowledge that it muſt be purchaſed for us by "Him who loved us, and "waſhed us from our ſins in his blood;" yet let us remember that we have no reaſon to expect we would be capable of enjoying the pleaſures of a heaven ſo purchaſed without heavenly mindedneſs. When thoſe perſons who are apt to expect as much comfort from religion as if their hearts were not full of the world, now and then, in a fit of honeſty or low ſpirits, complain that Chriſtianity does not make them as good and happy as they were led to expect from that aſſurance, that "great "peace have they who love the Lord," and that "they who wait on him ſhall want no "manner of thing that is good;" when they lament that the paths of religion are not thoſe "paths of pleaſantneſs" which they were led to expect; their caſe reminds one of a celebrated phyſician, who uſed to ſay, that the reaſon why his preſcriptions, which commonly cured the poor and the temperate, did ſo little good among his rich luxuriant patients, was, that while he was labouring to remove the diſeaſe by medicines, of which they only took drams,

drams, grains, and ſcruples; they were inflaming it by a multiplicity of injurious aliments, which they ſwallowed by ounces, pounds, and pints.

Theſe faſhionable Chriſtians ſhould be reminded, that there was no half engagement made for them at their baptiſm; that they are not partly their own and partly their Redeemer's. He that is "bought with a price," is the ſole property of the purchaſer. Faith does not conſiſt merely in ſubmitting the opinions of the underſtanding, but the diſpoſitions of the heart: religion is not a ſacrifice of ſentiments, but of affections: it is not the tribute of fear extorted from a ſlave, but the voluntary homage of love paid by a child.

Neither does a Chriſtian's piety conſiſt in living in retreat, and railing at the practices of the world, while, perhaps, her heart is full of the ſpirit of that world at which ſhe is railing: but it conſiſts in *ſubduing* the ſpirit of the world, reſiſting its temptations, and oppoſing its practices, even while her duty obliges her to live in it.

Nor is the ſpirit or the love of the world confined only to thoſe only who are making a figure in it; nor are its operations bounded by the precincts of the metropolis, nor by the limited regions of firſt-rate rank and ſplendor. She who inveighs againſt the luxury and exceſſes of London, and ſolaces herſelf in her own comparative ſobriety, becauſe her more circumſcribed

ſcribed fortune compels her to take up with the ſecond-hand pleaſures of ſucceſſive watering-places, if ſhe purſue theſe pleaſures with avidity, is go erned by the ſame ſpirit: and ſhe whoſe ſtill narrower opportunities ſtint her to the petty diverſions of her provincial town, if ſhe be buſied in ſwelling and enlarging her ſmaller ſphere of vanity and idleneſs, however ſhe may comfort herſelf with her own comparative goodneſs, by railing at the unattainable pleaſures of the watering-place, or the ſtill more unapproachable joys of the capital, is governed by the ſame ſpirit: for ſhe who is as vain, as diſſipated, and as extravagant as actual circumſtances admit, would be as vain, as diſſipated, and as extravagant as the gayeſt objects of her invective actually are, if ſhe could change places with them. It is not merely by what we do that we can be ſure the ſpirit of the world has no dominion over us, but by fairly conſidering what we ſhould probably do if more were in our power.

The worldly Chriſtian, if I may be allowed ſuch a palpable contradiction in terms, muſt not imagine that ſhe acquits herſelf of her religious obligations by paying in her mere weekly oblation of prayer. There is no covenant by which communion with God is reſtricted to an hour or two on the Sunday: ſhe muſt not imagine ſhe acquits herſelf by ſetting apart a few particular days in the year for the exerciſe of a

periodical

periodical devotion, and then flying back to the world as eagerly as if ſhe were reſolved to repay herſelf with large intereſt for her ſhort fit of ſelf-denial; the ſtream of pleaſure running with a more rapid current, from having been interrupted by this forced obſtruction. And the avidity with which one has ſeen certain perſons of a ſtill leſs correct character than the claſs we have been conſidering, return to whole a year's carnival, after the ſelf-impoſed penance of a Paſſion week, gives a ſhrewd intimation that they conſidered the temporary abſtraction leſs as an act of penitence for the paſt, than as a purchaſe of indemnity for the future. Such bare-weight proteſtants prudently condition for retaining the Popiſh doctrine of indulgences, which they buy, not indeed of the late ſpiritual court of Rome, but of that ſecret, ſelf-acquitting judge, which ignorance of its own turpitude, and of the ſtrict requirements of the divine law, has eſtabliſhed ſupreme in the tribunal of every unrenewed heart.

But the practice of ſelf-examination is impeded by one clog, which renders it peculiarly inconvenient to the gay and worldly: for the royal prophet (who was, however, himſelf as likely as any one to be acquainted with the difficulties peculiar to greatneſs) has annexed as a concomitant to "communing with our own "heart," that we ſhould "*be ſtill.*" Now this clauſe of the injunction annihilates the other, by

by rendering it incompatible with the preſent habits of faſhionable life, of which *ſtillneſs* is clearly not one of the conſtituents. It would, however, greatly aſſiſt thoſe who do not altogether decline the practice, if they were to eſtabliſh into a rule the habit of detecting certain ſuſpicious practices, by realizing them, as it were, to their own minds, through the means of drawing them out in detail, and of placing them before their eyes cloathed in language; for there is nothing that ſo effectually expoſes an abſurdity which has hitherto paſſed muſter for want of ſuch an inquiſition, as giving it ſhape, and form, and body. How many things which now ſilently work themſelves into the habit, and paſs current without inquiry, would then ſhock us by their palpable inconſiſtency! Who, for inſtance, could ſtand the ſight of ſuch a debtor and creditor account as this:—*Item*; So many card-parties, balls, and operas due to me in the following year, for ſo many manuals, prayers, and meditations paid beforehand during the laſt ſix days in Lent? With how much indignation ſoever this ſuggeſtion may be treated; whatever offence may be taken at ſuch a combination of the ſerious and the ludicrous; however we may revolt at the idea of ſuch a compoſition with our Maker, when put into ſo many words; does not the habitual courſe of ſome go near to realiſe ſuch a ſtatement?

But

But "a Chriſtian's *race*," as a venerable Prelate* obſerves, "is not run at ſo many "*heats*," but is a conſtant courſe, a regular progreſs by which we are continually gaining ground upon ſin, and approaching nearer to the kingdom of God.

Am I then ridiculing this pious ſecluſion of contrite ſinners? Am I then jeſting at that "troubled ſpirit" which God has declared is his "acceptable ſacrifice?" God forbid! Such reaſonable retirements have been the practice, and continue to be the comfort of ſome of the ſincereſt Chriſtians; and *will* continue to be reſorted to as long as Chriſtianity, that is, as long as the world, ſhall laſt. It is well to call off the thoughts, even for a ſhort time, not only from ſin and vanity, but even from the lawful purſuits of buſineſs and the laudable concerns of life; and at times, to annihilate, as it were, the ſpace which divides us from eternity:

'Tis greatly wiſe to talk with our paſt hours,
And aſk them what report they bore to heaven,
And how they might have borne more welcome news.

Yet as to thoſe who ſeek a ſhort annual retreat as a mere form; who dignify with the idea of a religious retirement a week in which it is rather unfaſhionable to be ſeen in town; who

* Biſhop Hopkins.

who retire with an unabated reſolution to return to the maxims, the pleaſures, and the ſpirit of that world which they do but mechanically renounce; is it not to be feared that ſuch a ſhort receſſion, which does not even pretend to ſubdue the principle, but merely ſuſpends the act, may only ſerve to ſet a keener edge on the appetite for the pleaſures they are quitting? Is it not to be feared that the bow may fly back with redoubled violence from having been unnaturally bent? that by varniſhing over a life of vanity with the tranſient externals of a formal and temporary piety, they may the more dangerouſly ſkin over the troubleſome ſoreneſs of a tender conſcience, by laying

This flattering unction to the ſoul?

And is it not awfully to be apprehended that ſuch devotions come in among thoſe vain oblations which the Almighty has declared he will not accept? For, is it not among the deluſions of a worldly piety, to conſider Chriſtianity as a thing which cannot, indeed, ſafely be omitted, but which is to *be got over*; a certain quantity of which is, as it were, to be taken in the lump, with long intervals between the repetitions? Is it not among its deluſions to conſider religion as impoſing a ſet of hardſhips, which *muſt* be occaſionally encountered in order to procure a peaceable enjoyment of the long reſpite?—a ſhort penalty for a long pleaſure?

ſure? that theſe ſevere conditions thus fulfilled, the acquitted Chriſtian having paid the annual demand of a rigorous requiſition, ſhe may now lawfully return to her natural ſtate; and the old reckoning being adjuſted, ſhe may begin a new ſcore, and receive the reward of her punctual obedience, in the reſumed indulgence of thoſe gratifications which ſhe had for a ſhort time laid aſide as a hard taſk to pleaſe a hard maſter: but this taſk performed, and the maſter appeaſed, the mind may diſcover its natural bent, in joyfully returning to the objects of its real choice? Whereas, is it not clear on the other hand, that if the religious exerciſes had produced the effect which it is the nature of true religion to produce, the penitent *could* not return with her old genuine alacrity to thoſe habits of the world, from the pious weekly manuals through which ſhe has been labouring with the punctuality of an almanac as to the day, and the accuracy of a bead-roll as to the number, were intended by the devout authors to reſcue their reader?

I am far from inſinuating, that this literal ſequeſtration ought to be prolonged throughout the year, or that all the days of buſineſs are to be made equally days of ſolemnity and continued meditation. This earth is a place in which a much larger portion of a common Chriſtian's time muſt be aſſigned to action than

to

to contemplation. Women of the higher claſs were not ſent into the world to ſhun ſociety, but to improve it. They were not deſigned for the cold and viſionary virtues of ſolitudes and monaſteries, but for the amiable, and endearing, and uſeful offices of ſocial life: they are of a religion which does not impoſe idle auſterities, but enjoins active duties; a religion which demands the moſt benevolent actions and which requires them to be ſanctified by the pureſt motives; a religion which does not condemn its followers to the comparatively eaſy taſk of ſecluſion from the world, but aſſigns them the more difficult province of living uncorrupted in it; a religion which, while it forbids them "to follow a multitude to do *evil*," includes in that prohibition the ſin of doing *nothing*, and which moreover enjoins them to be followers of him "who went about doing *good*."

But may we not reaſonably contend, that though the ſame ſequeſtration is not required, yet that the ſame *ſpirit* and *temper* which one hopes is thought neceſſary even by thoſe on whom we are animadverting during the occaſional humiliation, muſt, by every real Chriſtian, be extended throughout all the periods of the year? And when that is really the caſe, when once the ſpirit of religion ſhall indeed govern the heart, it will not only animate her religious actions and employments, but will gradually extend itſelf to the chaſtiſing her converſation,

ſation, will diſcipline her thoughts, influence her common buſineſs, reſtrain her indulgences, and ſanctify her very pleaſures.

But it ſhould ſeem that many, who entertain a *general* notion of Chriſtian duty, do not conſider it as of univerſal and unremitting obligation, but rather as a duty binding at all times on all, and at all times on ſome. To the attention of ſuch we would recommend that very explicit addreſs of our Lord on the ſubject of ſelf-denial, the temper directly oppoſed to a worldly ſpirit: "And he ſaid unto them ALL, "if any man will come after me, let him "deny himſelf, and take up his croſs DAILY." Thoſe who think ſelf-denial not of *univerſal* obligation, will obſerve the word *all*, and thoſe who think the obligation not *conſtant* will attend to the term *daily*. Theſe two little words cut up by the root all the occaſional religious obſervances grafted on a worldly life; all tranſient, periodical, and temporary acts of piety, which ſome ſeem willing to commute for a life of habitual thoughtleſneſs and vanity.

There is indeed ſcarcely a more pitiable being than one who, inſtead of making her religion the informing principle of all ſhe does, has only juſt enough to keep her in continual fear; who drudges through her ſtinted exerciſes with a ſuperſtitious kind of terror, while her general life ſhows that the love of holineſs is not the governing principle in her heart; who

ſeems

ſeems to ſuffer all the pains and penalties of Chriſtianity, but is a ſtranger to "that liberty "wherewith Chriſt has made us free." Let it not be thought a ludicrous invention, if the author hazard the producing a real illuſtration of theſe remarks, in the inſtance of a lady of this ſtamp, who returning from church on a very cold day, and remarking with a good deal of ſelf-complacency how much ſhe had ſuffered in the performance of her duty, comforted herſelf with emphatically adding, "that ſhe hoped "however it would *anſwer*."

But there is no permanent comfort in any religion, ſhort of that by which the diligent Chriſtian ſtrives that all his actions ſhall have the love of God for their motive, and the glory of God, as well as his own ſalvation, for their end; while to go about to balance one's good and bad actions one againſt the other, and to take comfort in the occaſional predominance of the former, while the cultivation of the principle from which they ſhould ſpring is neglected, is not the road to all thoſe peaceful fruits of the ſpirit to which true Chriſtianity conducts the humble and penitent believer. For, after all we can do, Chriſtian tempers and a Chriſtian ſpirit are perhaps the true criterion of a Chriſtian character, and ſerve to furniſh the moſt unequivocal teſt of our attainments in religion. Our doctrines may be ſound, but they may not be influential; our actions may

be correct, but they may want the ſanctifying principle; our frames and feelings may *ſeem*, nay they may *be* devout, but they may be heightened by mere animal fervour; even if genuine they are ſeldom laſting; and to many pious perſons they are not given: it is therefore the Chriſtian tempers which moſt infallibly indicate the ſincere Chriſtian, and beſt prepare him for the heavenly ſtate.

But I am aware that a better caſt of characters than thoſe we have been contemplating; that even the amiable and well-diſpoſed, who, while they want courage to reſiſt what they have too much principle to think right, and too much ſenſe to juſtify, will yet plead for the *palliating* ſyſtem, and accuſe theſe remarks of unneceſſary rigour. They will declare "that "really they are as religious as they can be; "they wiſh they were better; they have little "ſatisfaction in the life they are leading, yet "they cannot break with the world; they "cannot fly in the face of cuſtom; it does "not become individuals like them to oppoſe "the torrent of faſhion." Beings ſo intereſting, abounding with engaging qualities; who not only feel the beauty of goodneſs, but reverence the truths of Chriſtianity, and are awfully looking for a general judgment, one is grieved to hear lament "that they only do as "others do," when they are perhaps themſelves of ſuch rank and importance that if they would

would begin to do right, others would be brought to do as they did. One is grieved to hear them indolently aſſert, that "they wiſh it "were otherwiſe," when they poſſeſs the power to *make* it otherwiſe, by ſetting an example which they know would be followed. One is ſorry to hear them content themſelves with declaring, that "they have not the cou- "rage to be ſingular," when they muſt feel, by ſeeing the influence of their example in worſe things, that there would be no ſuch great ſingularity in piety itſelf, if once *they* became ſincerely pious. Beſides, this diffidence does not break out on other occaſions. They do not bluſh to be quoted as the oppoſers of an old mode, or the inventors of a new one. Nor are they equally backward in being the firſt to appear in a ſtrange faſhion, ſuch an one as often excites wonder, and ſometimes even offends againſt delicacy. Let not then diffidence be pleaded as an excuſe only on occaſions wherein courage would be virtue.

Will it be thought too harſh a queſtion if we venture to aſk theſe gentle characters who are thus intrenching themſelves in the imaginary ſafety of ſurrounding multitudes, and who ſay "We only do as others do," whether they are willing to run the tremendous riſk of conſequences, and *to fare as others fare?*

But while theſe plead the authority of Faſhion as a ſufficient reaſon for their conformity

to the world, one who has ſpoken with a paramount authority has poſitively ſaid, "Be ye *not* "conformed to the world." Nay, it is urged as the very badge and diſtinction by which the character oppoſite to the Chriſtian is to be marked, "that the friendſhip of the world is "*enmity* with God."

Temptation to conform to the world was never perhaps more irreſiſtible than in the days which immediately preceded the Deluge. And no man could ever have pleaded the *faſhion* in order to juſtify a criminal aſſimilation with the reigning manners, with more propriety than the Patriarch Noah. He had the two grand and contending objects of terror to encounter which we have; the fear ofridicule, and the fear of deſtruction; the dread of ſin, and the dread of ſingularity. Our cauſe of alarm is at leaſt equally preſſing with his; for it does not appear, even while he was actually obeying the Divine command in providing the means of his future ſafety, that he *ſaw* any actual ſymptoms of the impending ruin. So that in one ſenſe *he* might have truly pleaded as an excuſe for ſlackneſs of preparation, "that all things continued as they "were from the beginning;" while many of us, though the ſtorm is actually begun, never think of providing the refuge: it is true he was "warned of God," and he provided "by "faith." But are not we alſo warned of God? have we not had a fuller revelation? have we not

not ſeen Scripture illuſtrated, prophecy fulfilling, with every awful circumſtance that can either quicken the moſt ſluggiſh remiſſneſs, or confirm the feebleſt faith?

Beſides, the Patriarch's plea for following the faſhion was ſtronger than you can produce. While you muſt ſee that many are going wrong, he ſaw that none were going right. "All "fleſh had corrupted his way before God;" whilſt, bleſſed be God! you have ſtill inſtances enough of piety to keep you in countenance. While you lament that *the world* ſeduces you, (for every one has a little world of his own,) your world perhaps is only a petty neighbourhood, a few ſtreets and ſquares; but the Patriarch had really the contagion of a whole united world to reſiſt; he had literally the example of the whole face of the earth to oppoſe. The "fear of man" alſo would then have been a more pardonable fault, when the lives of the ſame individuals who were likely to excite reſpect or fear was prolonged many ages, than it can be in the ſhort period now aſſigned to human life. How lamentable then that human opinion ſhould operate ſo powerfully, when it is but the breath of a being ſo frail and ſo ſhort-lived,

That he doth ceaſe to be,
Ere one can ſay he is!

You

You who find it ſo difficult to withſtand the individual allurement of one modiſh acquaintance, would, if you had been in the Patriarch's caſe, have concluded the ſtruggle to be quite ineffectual, and ſunk under the ſuppoſed fruitleſneſs of reſiſtance. "Myſelf," would you not have ſaid? "or at moſt my little family of "eight perſons can never hope to ſtop this "torrent of corruption; I lament the fruitleſ-"neſs of oppoſition; I deplore the neceſſity "of conformity with the prevailing ſyſtem: "but it would be a fooliſh preſumption to hope "that *one* family can effect a change in the "ſtate of the world." In your own caſe, however, it is not certain to how wide an extent the hearty union of even fewer perſons in ſuch a cauſe might reach: at leaſt is it nothing to do what the Patriarch did? was it nothing to preſerve himſelf from the general deſtruction? was it nothing to deliver his own ſoul? was it nothing to reſcue the ſouls of his whole family?

A wiſe man will never differ from the world in trifles. It is certainly a mark of a ſound judgment to comply with cuſtom whenever we ſafely can; ſuch compliance ſtrengthens our influence by reſerving to ourſelves the greater weight of authority on thoſe occaſions, when our conſcience obliges us to differ. Thoſe who are prudent will cheerfully conform to all the innocent uſages of the world; but thoſe who

are

are Chriſtians will be ſcrupulous in defining which are really innocent previous to their conformity to them. Not what the world, but what the Goſpel calls innocent will be found at the grand ſcrutiny to have been really ſo. A diſcreet Chriſtian will take due pains to be convinced he is right, before he will preſume to be ſingular: but from the inſtant he is perſuaded that the Goſpel is true, and the world of courſe wrong, he will no longer riſk his ſafety by following multitudes, or hazard his ſoul by ſtaking it on human opinion. All our moſt dangerous miſtakes ariſe from our not conſtantly referring our practice to the ſtandard of Scripture, inſtead of the mutable ſtandard of human eſtimation by which it is impoſſible to fix the real value of characters. For this latter ſtandard in ſome caſes determines thoſe to be good who do not run all the lengths in which the notoriouſly bad allow themſelves. The Goſpel has an univerſal, the world has a local ſtandard of goodneſs: in certain ſocieties certain vices alone are diſhonourable, ſuch as covetouſneſs and cowardice; while thoſe ſins of which our Saviour has ſaid, that they which commit them "ſhall not inherit the king-"dom of God," detract nothing from the reſpect ſome perſons receive. Nay, thoſe very characters whom the Almighty has expreſsly and awfully declared "He will judge*," are received,

* Hebrews, xiii, 4.

received, are admired, are careſſed, in that which calls itſelf the beſt company.

But to weigh our actions by one ſtandard now, when we know they will be judged by another hereafter, would be reckoned the height of abſurdity in any tranſactions but thoſe which involve the intereſts of eternity. "How readeſt "thou?" is a more ſpecific direction than any comparative view of our own habits with the habits of others: and at the final bar it will be of little avail that our actions have riſen above thoſe of bad men, if our views and principles ſhall be found to have been in oppoſition to the Goſpel of Chriſt.

Nor is *their* practice more commendable, who are ever on the watch to pick out the worſt actions of good men, by way of juſtifying their own conduct on the compariſon. The faults of the beſt men, "for there is not a juſt man upon "the earth who ſinneth not," can in no wiſe juſtify the errors of the worſt: and it is not invariably the example of even good men that we muſt take for our unerring rule of conduct: nor is it by a ſingle action that either they or we ſhall be judged; for in that caſe who could be ſaved? but it is by the general prevalence of right principles and good habits, and Chriſtian tempers; by the predominance of holineſs, and righteouſneſs, and temperance in the life, and by the power of humility, faith, and love in the heart.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIX.

On the leading doctrines of Chriſtianity.—The corruption of human nature.—The doctrine of redemption.—The neceſſity of a change of heart, and of the divine influences to produce that change.—With a ſketch of the Chriſtian character.

THE author having in this little work taken a view of the falſe notions often imbibed in early life from a bad education, and of their pernicious effects; and having attempted to point out the reſpective remedies to theſe; ſhe would now draw all that has been ſaid to a point, and declare plainly what ſhe humbly conceives to be the ſource whence all theſe falſe notions and this wrong conduct really proceed: the prophet Jeremiah ſhall anſwer: "It is becauſe they have "forſaken the fountain of living waters, and "have hewn out to themſelves ciſterns, broken "ciſterns that can hold no water." It is an ignorance paſt belief of what true Chriſtianity really is: the remedy, therefore, and the only remedy that can be applied with any proſpect of ſucceſs, is RELIGION, and by Religion ſhe would be underſtood to mean the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt.

It has been before hinted, that Religion ſhould be taught at an early period of life; that children ſhould be *brought up* "in the nurture and ad-"monition of the Lord." The *manner* in which they ſhould be taught has likewiſe with great plainneſs been ſuggeſted; that it ſhould be done in ſo lively and familiar a manner as to make Religion amiable, and her ways to appear, what they really are, "ways of pleaſantneſs." And a ſlight ſketch has been given of the genius of Chriſtianity, by which her amiableneſs would more clearly appear. But this, being a ſubject of ſuch vaſt importance, compared with which every other ſubject ſinks into nothing; it ſeems not ſufficient to ſpeak on the doctrines and duties of Chriſtianity in *detached* parts, but it is of importance to point out, though in a brief and imperfect manner, the mutual dependance of one doctrine upon another, and the influence which theſe doctrines have upon the heart and life, ſo that the *duties* of Chriſtianity may be ſeen to grow out of its *doctrines*: by which it will appear that Chriſtian virtue differs *eſſentially* from Pagan: it is of a quite different kind: the plant itſelf is different, it comes from a different root, and grows in a different ſoil.

It will be ſeen how the humbling doctrine of the corruption of human nature, which has followed from the corruption of our firſt parents, makes way for the bright diſplay of redeeming love: how from the abaſing thought that "we

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" are all as ſheep going aſtray, every one in his " own way :" that none *can* return to the ſhepherd of our ſouls, " except the Father draw " him :" that " the natural man *cannot* receive " the things of the ſpirit, becauſe they are ſpi- " ritually diſcerned :" how from this humiliating view of the *helpleſneſs*, as well as the *corruption* of human nature, we are to turn to that animating doctrine, the offer of *divine aſſiſtance*. So that, though human nature will appear from this view in a deeply degraded ſtate, and conſequently *all* have cauſe for humility, yet not one has cauſe for deſpair : the diſeaſe indeed is dreadful, but a phyſician is at hand, both able and willing to ſave us ; though we are naturally without " ſtrength, our help is laid upon one " that is mighty."

We ſhould obſerve then, that the doctrines of our Saviour are, if I may ſo ſpeak, with a beautiful conſiſtency all woven into one piece. We ſhould get ſuch a view of their reciprocal dependence as to be perſuaded that, without a deep ſenſe of our own corruptions, we can never ſeriouſly believe in a Saviour, becauſe the ſubſtantial and acceptable belief in Him muſt always ariſe from the conviction of our want of Him ; that without a firm perſuaſion that the Holy Spirit can alone reſtore our fallen nature, repair the ruins of ſin, and renew the image of God upon the heart, we ſhall never be brought

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to ſerious humble prayer for repentance and reſtoration; and that, without this repentance, there is no ſalvation: for though Chriſt has died for us, and conſequently to him alone we muſt look as a Saviour, yet he has himſelf declared that he will ſave none but true penitents.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN CORRUPTION.

To come now to a more particular ſtatement of theſe doctrines. When an important edifice is about to be erected, a wiſe builder will dig deep, and look well to the foundations, knowing that without this the fabric will not be likely to ſtand. The foundation of the Chriſtian religion, out of which the whole ſtructure may be ſaid to ariſe, appears to be the doctrine of the fall of man from his original ſtate of righteouſneſs; and the corruption and helpleſneſs of human nature, which are the conſequences of this fall, and which is the natural ſtate of every one born into the world. To this doctrine it is important to conciliate the minds, more eſpecially of young perſons, who are peculiarly diſpoſed to turn away from it as a moroſe, unamiable, and gloomy idea: they are apt to accuſe thoſe who are more ſtrict and ſerious, of unneceſſary ſeverity, and to ſuſpect them of thinking unjuſtly ill of mankind. Some of the reaſons which prejudice the inexperienced againſt the doctrine in queſtion appear to be the following.

Young

Young perſons themſelves have ſeen little of the world. In pleaſurable ſociety the world puts on its moſt amiable appearance; and that ſoftneſs and urbanity which prevail, particularly amongſt perſons of faſhion, are liable to be miſtaken for more than they are really worth. The oppoſition to this doctrine in the young, ariſes partly from ingenuouſneſs of heart, partly from a habit of indulging themſelves in favourable ſuppoſitions reſpecting the world, rather than of purſuing truth, which is always the grand thing to be purſued; and partly from the popularity of the tenet, *that every body is ſo wonderfully good!*

This error in youth has however a ſtill deeper foundation, which is their not having a right ſtandard of moral good and evil, themſelves, in conſequence of their already partaking of the very corruption which is ſpoken of; they are therefore apt to have no very ſtrict ſenſe of duty, or of the neceſſity of a right and religious motive to every act.

Moreover, young people uſually do not know themſelves. Not having yet been much expoſed to temptation, owing to the prudent reſtraints in which they have been kept, they little ſuſpect to what lengths in vice they themſelves are liable to be tranſported, nor how far others actually are carried who are ſet free from thoſe reſtraints.

Having

Having laid down theſe as ſome of the cauſes of error on this point, I proceed to obſerve on what ſtrong grounds the doctrine itſelf ſtands.

Profane hiſtory abundantly confirms this truth: the hiſtory of the world being in fact little elſe than the hiſtory of the crimes of the human race. Even though the annals of remote ages lie ſo involved in obſcurity, that ſome degree of uncertainty attaches itſelf to many of the events recorded, yet this one melancholy truth is always clear, that moſt of the miſeries which have been brought upon mankind, have proceeded from this general depravity.

The world we now live in furniſhes abundant proof of this truth. In a world formed on the deceitful theory of thoſe who aſſert the innocence and dignity of man, almoſt all the profeſſions, ſince they would have been rendered uſeleſs by ſuch a ſtate of innocence, would not have exiſted. Without ſin we may nearly preſume there would have been no ſickneſs; ſo that every medical profeſſor is a ſtanding evidence of this ſad truth. Sin not only brought ſickneſs but death into the world; conſequently every funeral preſents a more irrefragable argument than a thouſand ſermons. Had man perſevered in his original integrity, there could have been no litigation, for there would be no conteſts about property in a world where none would be inclined to attack it. Profeſſors of law, there-

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fore, from the attorney who proſecutes for a treſpaſs, to the pleader who defends a criminal, or the judge who condemns him, loudly confirm the doctrine. Every victory by ſea or land ſhould teach us to rejoice with humiliation, for conqueſt itſelf brings a terrible, though ſplendid, atteſtation to the truth of the fall of man.

Even thoſe, who deny the doctrine, act univerſally more or leſs on the principle. Why do we all ſecure our houſes with bolts, and bars, and locks? Do we take theſe ſteps to defend our lives or property from any *particular* fear? from any ſuſpicion of *this* neighbour, or *that* ſervant, or the *other* invader? No:—It is from a practical conviction of the common depravity; from a conſtant, pervading, but undefined dread of impending evil ariſing from the ſenſe of general corruption. Are not priſons built, and laws enacted, on the ſame practical principle?

But not to deſcend to the more degraded part of our ſpecies. Why in the faireſt tranſaction of buſineſs is nothing executed without bonds, receipts, and notes of hand? why does not a perfect confidence in the *dignity of human nature* aboliſh all theſe ſecurities; if not between enemies, or people indifferent to each other, yet at leaſt between friends and kindred, and the moſt honourable connexions? why, but becauſe of that univerſal ſuſpicion between man and man, which, by all we ſee, and hear, and feel, is become interwoven with our very make? Though

we

we do not entertain any *individual* ſuſpicion, nay, though we have the ſtrongeſt *perſonal* confidence, yet the acknowledged principle of conduct has this doctrine for its baſis. "I will take a receipt, "though it were from my brother," is the eſtabliſhed voice of mankind; or, as I have heard it more artfully put, by a fallacy of which the very diſguiſe diſcovers the principle, "Think "every man honeſt, but deal with him as if you "knew him to be otherwiſe." And as in a ſtate of innocence, the beaſts, it is preſumed, would not have bled for the ſuſtenance of man, ſo their parchments would not have been wanted as inſtruments of his ſecurity againſt his fellow man*.

But the grand arguments for this doctrine muſt be drawn from the Holy Scriptures: and theſe, beſides implying it almoſt continually, expreſsly aſſert it; and that in inſtances too numerous to be all of them brought forward here. Of theſe may I be allowed to produce a few? "God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was "great, and that every imagination of the "thoughts of his heart was only evil conti-"nually:"—"God looked upon the earth, and "behold,

* Biſhop Butler diſtinctly declares this truth to be evident, from experience as well as Revelation, "that this "world exhibits an idea of a RUIN;" and *he* will hazard much who ventures to aſſert that Butler defended Chriſtianity upon principles unconſonant to *reaſon, philoſophy*, or *ſound experience*.

" behold, it was corrupt; for *all flesh* had cor-
" rupted his way upon the earth. And it *re-*
" *pented* the Lord that he had made man on the
" earth, and it *grieved him at his heart**." This is a picture of mankind *before* the flood, and the doctrine receives additional confirmation in Scripture, when it speaks of the times which followed after that tremendous judgment had taken place. The Psalms abound in lamentations on the depravity of man." " They are *all* gone
" aside; there is *none* that doeth good, no not
" *one*."—" In *thy* sight," says David, addressing the Most High, " shall *no man living* be justified." Job, in his usual lofty strain of interrogation, asks, " What is man that he should be clean,
" and he that is born of a woman that he should
" be righteous? Behold the heavens are not
" clean in *His* sight, how much more abominable
" and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like
" water?"

Nor do the Scriptures speak of this corruption as arising only from occasional temptation, or from mere extrinsic causes. The wise man tells us, that " foolishness is bound up in the *heart*
" *of a child*:" the prophet Jeremiah assures us,
" the *heart* is deceitful above all things, and des-
" perately wicked;" and David plainly states the doctrine: " Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and

* Genesis, vi.

" and in ſin did my mother conceive me." Can language be more explicit?

The New Teſtament corroborates the Old. Our Lord's reproof of Peter ſeems to take the doctrine for granted: " Thou ſavoureſt not the " things that be of God, but thoſe that be of " *man*;" clearly intimating, that the *ways of man* are oppoſite to the ways of God. And our Saviour, in that affecting diſcourſe to his diſciples, obſerves to them that, as they were by his grace made *different* from others, therefore they muſt expect to be hated by thoſe who were ſo unlike them. And it ſhould be particularly obſerved, as another proof that the world is wicked, that our Lord conſidered " *the world*" as oppoſed to him and to his diſciples. " If ye were of the " world, the world would love its own; but I " have choſen you out of the world, therefore " the world hateth you*." St. John, writing to his Chriſtian church, ſta es the ſame truth: " We know that we are of God, and the whole " world lieth in wickedneſs."

Man in his natural and unbelieving ſtate is likewiſe repreſented as in a ſtate of *guilt*, and under the diſpleaſure of Almighty God. " He " that believeth not the Son ſhall not ſee life; " but the wrath of God *abideth* on him."

Here, however, if it be objected, that the heathen who never heard of the Goſpel will not aſſuredly

* John, xv. 19.

aſſuredly be judged by it, the Saviour's anſwer to ſuch curious inquirers concerning the ſtate of others is, "Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate." It is enough for us to believe that God, who will "judge the world in righteouſneſs," will judge all men according to their opportunities. The heathen, to whom he has not ſent the light of the Goſpel, will probably not be judged by the Goſpel. But with whatever mercy he may judge thoſe who, living in a land of darkneſs, are without knowledge of his revealed law, *our* buſineſs is not with them, but with ourſelves. It is *our* buſineſs to conſider what mercy he will extend to thoſe who, living in a Chriſtian country, abounding with means and ordinances, where the Goſpel is preached in its purity; it is *our* buſineſs to inquire how he will deal with thoſe who ſhut their eyes to its beams, who cloſe their ears to its truths. For an unbeliever who has paſſed his life in the meridian of Scripture light, or for an outward but unfruitful profeſſor of Chriſtianity, I know not what hope the Goſpel holds out.

The natural ſtate of man is again thus deſcribed: "The carnal mind is enmity againſt "God; (awful thought!) for it is not ſubject "to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be. So "then they that are in the fleſh *cannot* pleaſe "God." What the Apoſtle means by *being in the fleſh*, is evident by what follows; for ſpeaking of thoſe whoſe hearts were changed by Divine

vine grace, he ſays, "But ye are *not* in the fleſh, "but in the ſpirit, if ſo be that the ſpirit of "God dwell in you:" that is, you are now in your natural ſtate: the change that has paſſed on your minds by the influence of the Spirit of God is ſo great, that your ſtate may properly be called being in the ſpirit. It may be further obſerved that the ſame Apoſtle, writing to the churches of Galatia, tells them, that the natural corruption of the human heart is continually oppoſing the ſpirit of holineſs which influences the regenerate. "The fleſh luſteth againſt the "ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe "are contrary the one to the other:" which paſſage by the way, at the ſame time that it proves the corruption of the heart, proves the neceſſity of divine influences. And the Apoſtle, with reſpect to himſelf, freely confeſſes and deeply laments the workings of this corrupt principle: "O wretched man that I am, who "ſhall deliver me from the body of this "death?"

It has been objected by ſome who have oppoſed this doctrine, that the ſame Scriptures which ſpeak of mankind as being *ſinners*, ſpeak of ſome as being *righteous*; and hence they would argue, that though this depravity of human nature may be *general*, yet it cannot be *univerſal*. This objection, when examined, ſerves only, like all other objections againſt the truth, to eſtabliſh that which it was intended to deſtroy.

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For what do the Scriptures aſſert reſpecting the righteous? That there are ſome whoſe principles, views, and conduct, are ſo different from the reſt of the world, and from what theirs themſelves once were, that theſe perſons are honoured with the peculiar title of the "ſons of God." But nowhere do the Scriptures aſſert that even theſe are *ſinleſs*; on the contrary their *faults* are frequently mentioned; and perſons of this claſs are moreover repreſented as thoſe on whom a great *change* has paſſed: as having been formerly "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins;" but as "being "now *called out* of darkneſs into light;" as *tranſlated* into the kingdom "of God's dear "Son;" as "having *paſſed* from death to life." And St. Paul put this matter paſt all doubt, by expreſsly aſſerting, that "*they were all* by nature "the children of wrath even as others."

It might be well to aſk certain perſons, who oppoſe the doctrine in queſtion, and who alſo ſeem to talk as if they thought there were many ſinleſs people in the world, how they expect that ſuch ſinleſs people will be ſaved? (though indeed to talk of an *innocent* perſon being *ſaved* involves palpable contradiction in terms, of which thoſe who uſe the expreſſion do not ſeem to be aware; it is talking of curing a man already in health). "Undoubtedly," ſuch will ſay, "they will be received into thoſe abodes of "bliſs prepared for the righteous."—But be it remembered, there is but *one way* to theſe bliſsful abodes,

abodes, and that is, through Jeſus Chriſt: "For "there is none other name given among men "whereby we muſt be ſaved." If we aſk whom did Chriſt come to ſave? the Scripture directly anſwers, "He came into the world to ſave *ſin-* "*ners*:"—"His name was called Jeſus, becauſe "he came to ſave his people *from their ſins*." When St. John was favoured with a heavenly viſion, he tells us, that he beheld "a great "multitude which no man could number, of "all nations, and kindred, and people, and "tongues, ſtanding before the throne, and before "the Lamb, clothed with white robes:" that one of the heavenly inhabitants informed him who they were: "Theſe are they who come out "of great tribulation, and have waſhed their "robes, and made them white in the blood of "the Lamb; therefore are they before the "throne of God, and ſerve Him day and night "in his Temple; and He that ſitteth on the "throne ſhall dwell among them; they ſhall "hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, nei- "ther ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat; "for the Lamb which is in the midſt of "them ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them "to living fountains of waters, and God ſhall "wipe away all tears from their eyes."

We may gather from this deſcription what theſe glorious and happy beings once were: they were *ſinful* creatures; their robes were not *ſpot-* *leſs*: "They had *waſhed* them, and made them "white in the blood of the Lamb." They are likewiſe

likewiſe generally repreſented as having been once a *ſuffering* people: they came out of great tribulation. They are deſcribed as having overcome the great Tempter of mankind, "by the "blood of the Lamb*:" as they who "follow "the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth:" as "re-"deemed from among men†." And their *employment* in the regions of bliſs is a farther confirmation of the doctrine of which we are treating. "The great multitude," &c. &c. we are told, "ſtood and cried with a loud voice, "Salvation "to our God, who ſitteth upon the throne, and "to the Lamb!" Here we ſee they aſcribe their ſalvation to Chriſt, and conſequently their preſent happineſs to his atoning blood. And in another of their celeſtial anthems, they ſay in like manner: "Thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed "us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, "and tongue, and people, and nation‡."

By all this it is evident that men of any other deſcription than *redeemed ſinners* muſt gain admittance to heaven ſome other way than that which the Scriptures point out; and alſo that when they ſhall arrive there, ſo different will be their employment, that they muſt have an anthem peculiar to themſelves.

Nothing is more adapted to "the caſting down of high imaginations," and to promote humility,

* Rev. xii. 14. † Rev. xiv. 4. ‡ Rev. v. 9.

humility, than this reflection, that heaven is always in Scripture pointed out not as the reward of the innocent, but as the hope of the penitent. This, while it is calculated to "exclude boaſting," the temper the moſt oppoſite to the Goſpel, is yet the moſt ſuited to afford comfort; for were heaven promiſed as the reward of innocence, who could attain to it? but being, as it is, the promiſed portion of faith and repentance, who is compelled to miſs it?

It is urged that the belief of this doctrine of our corruption produces many ill effects, and therefore it ſhould be diſcouraged.—That it does *not* produce thoſe ill effects, when not miſunderſtood or partially repreſented, we ſhall attempt to ſhow: at the ſame time let it be obſerved, if it be really *true* we muſt not reject it on account of any of theſe ſuppoſed ill conſequences. Truth may often be attended with diſagreeable effects, but if it be truth it muſt ſtill be purſued. If, for inſtance, treaſon ſhould exiſt in a country, every one knows the diſagreeable effects which will follow ſuch a conviction; but our *not believing* ſuch treaſon to exiſt, will not prevent ſuch effect following it: on the contrary, our believing it may prevent the fatal conſequences.

It is objected, that this doctrine debaſes and degrades human nature, and that finding fault with the building is only another way of finding fault with the architect. To the firſt part of this objection it may be remarked, that if man be

be really a corrupt, fallen being, it is proper to repreſent him as ſuch: the fault then lies in the *man*, and not in the *doctrine*, which only ſtates the *truth*. As to the inference which is ſuppoſed to follow, namely, that it throws the fault upon the Creator, it proceeds upon the falſe ſuppoſition that man's preſent corrupt ſtate is the ſtate in which he was originally created: and alſo that God has left him unavoidably to periſh in it, whereas although "in Adam we die, in "Chriſt we ſhall be made alive."

It is likewiſe objected, that as this doctrine muſt give us ſuch a bad opinion of mankind, it muſt conſequently produce ill-will, hatred, and ſuſpicion. But it ſhould be remembered, that it gives us no worſe an opinion of other men than it gives us of ourſelves; and ſuch views of ourſelves have a very ſalutary effect, inaſmuch as they have a tendency to produce *humility*; and humility is not likely to produce ill-will to others, "for only from pride cometh contention:" and as to the views it gives us of mankind, it repreſents us as *fellow-ſufferers*; and ſurely the conſideration that we are *companions in miſery* is not calculated to produce hatred. The truth is, theſe effects, where they have actually followed, have followed from a falſe and partial view of the ſubject.

Old perſons who have ſeen much of the world, and who have little religion, are apt to be ſtrong

in their belief of man's actual corruption; but not taking it up on Chriſtian grounds, this belief in them ſhows itſelf in a narrow and malignant temper; in uncharitable judgment and harſh opinions, in individual ſuſpicion, and in too general a diſpoſition to hatred.

Suſpicion and hatred alſo are the uſes to which Rochefoucault and the other French philoſophers have converted this doctrine: their acute minds intuitively found the corruption of man, and they ſaw it without its concomitant and correcting doctrine: they allowed man to be a depraved creature, but diſallowed his high original: they found him in a low ſtate, but did not conceive of him as having fallen from a better. They repreſent him rather as a brute than an apoſtate; not taking into the account that his preſent degraded nature and depraved faculties are not his original ſtate: that he is not ſuch as he came out of the hands of his Creator, but ſuch as he has been made by ſin. Nor do they know that he has not even now loſt all remains of his primitive dignity, all traces of his divine original, but is ſtill capable of a reſtoration more glorious

Than is dreamt of in their philoſophy.

Perhaps, too, they know from what they *feel*, all the *evil* to which man is inclined; but they do not know, for they have not felt, all the good of

of which he is capable by the ſuperinduction of the divine principle: thus they aſperſe human nature inſtead of repreſenting it fairly, and in ſo doing it is *they* who calumniate the great Creator.

The doctrine of corruption is likewiſe accuſed of being a gloomy, diſcouraging doctrine, and an enemy to joy and comfort. Now ſuppoſe this objection true in its fulleſt extent. Is it any way unreaſonable that a being fallen into a ſtate of ſin, under the diſpleaſure of Almighty God, ſhould feel *ſeriouſly alarmed* at being in ſuch a ſtate? Is the condemned criminal blamed becauſe he is not *merry?* And would it be eſteemed a kind action to perſuade him that he is *not* condemned in order to make him ſo?

But this charge is *not* true in the ſenſe intended by thoſe who bring it forward. Thoſe who believe this doctrine are *not* the moſt gloomy people. When, indeed, any one by the influence of the Holy Spirit is brought to view his ſtate as it really is, a ſtate of guilt and danger, it is natural that *fear* ſhould be excited in his mind, but it is ſuch a fear as impels him "to flee from "the wrath to come:" it is ſuch a fear as moved Noah to "prepare an ark to the ſaving of his "houſe." Such an one will likewiſe feel *ſorrow*; not however "the ſorrow of the world which "worketh death," but that godly ſorrow which worketh repentance. Such an one is ſaid to be driven to *deſpair* by this doctrine; but it is the

deſpair of his own ability to ſave himſelf; it is that wholeſome deſpair produced by conviction and humility which drives him to ſeek a better refuge; and ſuch an one is in a proper ſtate to receive the glorious doctrine we are next about to contemplate; namely,

THAT GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVED ON HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

Of this doctrine it is of the laſt importance to form juſt views, for as it is the only doctrine which can keep the humble penitent from deſpair, ſo, on the other hand, great care muſt be taken that falſe views of it do not lead us to preſumption. In order to underſtand it rightly, we muſt not fill our minds with our own reaſonings upon it, which is the way in which ſome good people have been miſled, but we muſt betake ourſelves to the Scriptures, wherein we ſhall find the doctrine ſtated ſo plainly as to ſhew that the miſtakes have not ariſen from a want of clearneſs in the Scriptures, but from a deſire to make it bend to ſome favourite notions. While it has been totally rejected by ſome, it has been ſo mutilated by others, as hardly to retain any reſemblance to the Scripture doctrine of redemption. We are told in the beautiful paſſage laſt quoted *its ſource*—the love of God to a loſt world;—*who* the Redeemer was—the Son of God;—the *end* for which this plan was formed and

and executed—"that whoſoever believed in him "ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life."—"As I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure "in the death of the wicked."—"He would "have all men to be ſaved and to come to the "knowledge of the truth."—"He would not "have any periſh, but that all ſhould come to "repentance." There is nothing ſurely in all this to promote gloomineſs. On the contrary, if kindneſs and mercy have a tendency to win and warm the heart, here is every incentive to joy and cheerfulneſs. Chriſtianity looks kindly towards all, and with peculiar tenderneſs on ſuch as, from humbling views of their own unworthineſs, might be led to fancy themſelves excluded:—we are expreſsly told, that "Chriſt "died for *all:*"—that "he taſted death for "*every* man;"—that "he died for the ſins of "the *whole world.*" Accordingly he has commanded that his Goſpel ſhould be "preached to "*every creature;*" which is in effect declaring, that not a ſingle human being is excluded: for to preach the Goſpel is to offer a Saviour:—and the Saviour in the plaineſt language offers himſelf to all,—declaring to "all the ends of the "earth"—"Look unto me and be ſaved." It is therefore an undeniable truth, that no one will periſh for *want* of a Saviour, but for *rejecting* him.

But to ſuppoſe that becauſe Chriſt has *died* for the "ſins of the whole world," the whole world will therefore be *ſaved*, is a moſt fatal miſtake:

miſtake: in the ſame book which tells us that "Chriſt died for all," we have likewiſe this awful admonition; "Strait is the gate, and *few* "there be that find it;" which, whether it be underſtood of the immediate reception of the Goſpel, or of the final uſe which was too likely to be made of it, gives no encouragement to hope that *all* will be qualified to partake of its promiſes. And whilſt it declares that "there "is no other name whereby we may be ſaved "but the name of Jeſus;" it likewiſe declares

THAT "WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL "SEE THE LORD."

It is much to be feared that ſome, in their zeal to defend the Goſpel doctrines of free grace, have materially injured the Goſpel doctrine of holineſs: ſtating, that Chriſt has done all in ſuch a ſenſe, as that there is nothing left for us to do.—But do the Scriptures hold out this language?—"Come, for all things are ready," is the Goſpel call; in which we may obſerve, that at the ſame time that it tells us that "all things "are ready," it nevertheleſs tells us that we muſt "*come*." Food being *provided* for us will not benefit us except we partake of it.—It will not avail us that "Chriſt our paſſover is *ſacrificed* "for us," unleſs "we *keep* the feaſt."—We muſt *make uſe* of "the fountain which is opened "for ſin and for uncleanneſs," if we would be *purified*.

purified. "All, indeed, who are *athirſt* are in-"vited to take of the waters of life freely;" but if we feel no "*thirſt;*" if we do not *drink*, their ſaving qualities are of no avail.

It is the more neceſſary to inſiſt on this in the preſent day, as there is a worldly and faſhionable, as well as a low and ſectarian Antinomianiſm: there lamentably prevails in the world an unwarranted aſſurance of Salvation, founded on a ſlight, vague, and general confidence in what Chriſt has done and ſuffered for us, as if the great object of his doing and ſuffering had been to emancipate *us* from all obligations to duty and obedience; and as if, becauſe he died for ſinners, we might therefore ſafely and comfortably go on to live in ſin, contenting ourſelves with now and then a tranſient, formal, and unmeaning avowal of our unworthineſs, our obligation, and the all-ſufficiency of *his* atonement. By the diſcharge of this quit-rent, of which all the coſt conſiſts in the acknowledgment, the ſenſual, the worldly, and the vain hope to find a refuge in heaven, when driven from the enjoyments of this world. But this cheap and indolent Chriſtianity is nowhere taught in the Bible. The faith inculcated *there* is not a lazy, profeſſional faith, but that faith which "worketh by love," that faith of which the practical language is—"*Strive* that you may enter in;"—"So *run* that "you may obtain;"—"So *fight* that you may "lay hold on eternal life:"—that faith which directs

directs us "not to be weary in well-doing;"—which ſays, "*Work* out your own ſalvation:"—never forgetting at the ſame time, "that it is "God which worketh in us both to will and to "do." The contrary doctrine is implied in the very name of the Redeemer: "And his name "ſhall be called Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his peo-"ple *from* their ſins," not *in* their ſins.—Are thoſe rich ſupplies of grace which the Goſpel offers; are thoſe abundant aids of the ſpirit which it promiſes, tendered to the *ſlothful?*—No.—God will have all his gifts improved. Grace muſt be uſed, or it will be withdrawn. The Almighty thinks it not derogatory to his free grace to declare, that "thoſe only who do "his commandments have right to the tree of "life." And the Scriptures repreſent it as not derogatory to the *ſacrifice* of Chriſt, to follow his example in well-doing. The only caution is, that we muſt not work in our own ſtrength, nor bring in our contribution of works as if in aid of the ſuppoſed deficiency of His merits.

For we muſt not in our *over-caution* fancy, that becauſe Chriſt has "redeemed us from the "curſe of the law," we are therefore without a law. In acknowledging Chriſt as a deliverer, we muſt not forget that he is a law-giver too, and that we are expreſsly commanded "to fulfil "the law of Chriſt:" if then we wiſh to know what his laws are, we muſt "ſearch the Scrip-"tures,"

"tures," eſpecially the New Teſtament; there we ſhall find him declaring

THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF A CHANGE OF HEART AND LIFE:

Our Saviour ſays, that "except a man be born "again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God:" that it is not a mere acknowledging His authority, calling him "Lord, Lord," that will avail any thing, except we DO what He commands: that any thing ſhort of this is like a man building his houſe upon the ſands, which, when the ſtorms come on, will certainly fall. In like manner the Apoſtles are continually enforcing the neceſſity of this change, which they deſcribe under the various names of "the new man*;"—"the "new creature†;"—"a transformation into the "image of God‡;"—"a participation of the "divine nature§." Nor is this change repreſented as conſiſting merely in a change of religious opinions, not even in being delivered over from a worſe to a better ſyſtem of doctrines, nor in exchanging groſs ſins for thoſe which are more ſober and reputable; nor in renouncing the ſins of youth, and aſſuming thoſe of a quieter period of life; nor in leaving off evil practices becauſe men are grown tired of them,

* Epheſians, iv. 24, † Galatians, vi. 15.
‡ 2 Corinthians, xii. § 2 Peter, i. 4.

or find they injure their credit, health, or fortune; nor does it conſiſt in inoffenſiveneſs and obliging manners, nor indeed in any merely *outward* reformation.

But the change conſiſts in "being renewed "in the ſpirit of our minds;" in being "con-"formed to the image of the Son of God;" in being "called out of darkneſs into His marvel-"lous light." And the whole of this great change, its beginning, progreſs, and final accompliſhment, (for it is repreſented as a gradual change,) is aſcribed to

THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We are perpetually reminded of our utter inability to help ourſelves, that we may ſet the higher value on thoſe gracious aids which are held out to us. We are taught that "we are "not ſufficient to *think* any thing as of ourſelves, "but our ſufficiency is of God." And when we are told that "if we live after the fleſh, "we ſhall die," we are at the ſame time reminded, that it is "through the *ſpirit* that we "muſt mortify the deeds of the body." We are likewiſe cautioned that we "grieve not the "Holy Spirit of God;" that we "quench not "the Spirit." By all which expreſſions, and many others of like import, we are taught that, while we are to aſcribe with humble gratitude every good thought, word, and work, to the influence

influence of the Holy Spirit, we are not to look on ſuch influences as ſuperſeding our own exertions: and it is too plain that we *may* reject the gracious offers of aſſiſtance, ſince otherwiſe there would be no occaſion to caution us *not* to do it. The Scriptures have illuſtrated this in terms which are familiar indeed, but which are therefore only the more condeſcending and endearing. "Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock. If "any man hear my voice and open the door, I "will come in to him, and will ſup with him, "and he with me." Obſerve, it is not ſaid, if any man will not liſten to me, I will force open the door. But if we refuſe admittance to ſuch a gueſt, we muſt abide by the conſequences.

The ſublime doctrine of divine aſſiſtance is the more to be prized, not only on account of our own helpleſneſs, but from the additional conſideration of the powerful adverſary with whom the Chriſtian has to contend: an article of our faith by the way, which is growing into general diſrepute among the politer claſſes of ſociety. Nay, there is a kind of ridicule attached to the very ſuggeſtion of the ſubject, as if it were exploded by general agreement, on full proof of its being an abſolute abſurdity, utterly repugnant to the liberal ſpirit of an enlightened age. And it requires no ſmall neatneſs of expreſſion and periphraſtic ingenuity to get the very mention tolerated:—I mean

THE

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE EXISTENCE AND POWER OF OUR GREAT SPIRITUAL ENEMY.

This is conſidered by the faſhionable ſceptic as a vulgar invention, which ought to be baniſhed with the belief in dreams, and ghoſts, and witchcraft:—by the faſhionable Chriſtian, as an ingenious allegory, but not as a literal truth; and by almoſt all, as a doctrine which, when it happens to be introduced at Church, has at leaſt nothing to do with the *pews*, but is by common conſent made over to the *aiſles*, if indeed it muſt be retained at all.

May I, with great humility and reſpect, preſume to ſuggeſt to our divines that they would do well not to lend their countenance to theſe modiſh curtailments of the Chriſtian faith; nor to ſhun the introduction of this doctrine whenever it conſiſts with their ſubject to bring it forward. A truth which is ſeldom brought before the eye, imperceptibly grows leſs and leſs important; and if it be an unpleaſing truth, we grow more and more reconciled to its abſence, till at length its intruſion becomes offenſive, and we learn in the end to renounce what we at firſt only neglected. Becauſe ſome coarſe and ranting enthuſiaſts have been fond of uſing tremendous terms and awful denunciations with a violence and frequency, which might make it ſeem to be a gratification

a gratification to them to denounce judgments and anticipate torments, can *their* coarſeneſs or vulgarity make a true doctrine falſe, or an important one trifling? If ſuch preachers have given offence by their uncouth manner of managing an awful doctrine, that indeed furniſhes a caution to treat the ſubject more diſcreetly, but it is no juſt reaſon for avoiding the doctrine. For to keep a truth out of ſight becauſe it has been abſurdly handled or ill-defended, might in time be aſſigned as a reaſon for keeping back, one by one, every doctrine of our holy church; for which of them has not occaſionally had imprudent advocates or weak champions?

Be it remembered that the doctrine in queſtion is not only interwoven by alluſion, implication, or direct aſſertion throughout the whole Scripture, but that it ſtands prominently *perſonified* at the opening of the New as well as the Old Teſtament. The devil's temptation of our Lord, in which he is not repreſented figuratively, but viſibly and palpably, ſtands exactly on the ſame ground of authority with other events which are received without repugnance. And it may not be an unuſeful obſervation to remark, that the very refuſing to believe in an evil ſpirit, may be conſidered as one of his own ſuggeſtions; for there is not a more dangerous illuſion than to believe ourſelves out of the reach of illuſions, nor a more alarming temptation than to fancy that we are not liable to be tempted.

But

But the dark cloud raiſed by this doctrine will be diſpelled by the cheering certainty that our bleſſed Saviour having himſelf "been tempted "like as we are, is able to deliver thoſe who "are tempted."

But to return.—From this imperfect ſketch we may ſee how ſuitable the religion of Chriſt is to fallen man! How exactly it meets every want! No one needs now periſh becauſe he is a ſinner, provided he be willing to forſake his ſins; for "Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to "ſave ſinners:" and "He is now exalted to be "a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance "and forgiveneſs of ſin." Which paſſage, be it obſerved, may be conſidered as pointing out to us the *order* in which he beſtows his bleſſings; he gives firſt *repentance*, and then *forgiveneſs*.

We may likewiſe ſee how much the character of a true Chriſtian riſes above every other: that there is a wholeneſs, an integrity, a completeneſs in the Chriſtian character: that a few natural, pleaſing qualities, not caſt in the mould of the Goſpel, are but as beautiful fragments, or well-turned ſingle limbs, which for want of that beauty which ariſes from the proportion of parts, for want of that connection of the members with the living head, are of little comparative excellence. There may be amiable qualities which are not Chriſtian graces: and the Apoſtle, after enumerating every ſeparate article of attack

tack or defence with which a Chriſtian warrior is to be accoutred, ſums up the matter by directing that we put on "the *whole* armour of "God." And this *completeneſs* is inſiſted on by all the Apoſtles. One prays that his converts may "ſtand *perfect* and *complete* in the whole "will of God:" another enjoins that they be "*perfect* and *entire*, wanting nothing."

Now we are not to ſuppoſe that they expected any convert to be *without faults*; they knew too well the conſtitution of the human heart to form ſo unfounded an expectation. But Chriſtians muſt have no fault in their *principle*; their views muſt be direct, their propoſed *ſcheme* muſt be faultleſs; their *intention* muſt be ſingle; their *ſtandard* muſt be lofty; their *object* muſt be right; their "*mark* muſt be the high calling of God "in Chriſt Jeſus."—There muſt be no *allowed* evil, no *warranted* defection, no *tolerated* impurity, no *habitual* irregularity. Though they do not riſe as high as they ought, nor as they wiſh, in the ſcale of perfection, yet the ſcale itſelf muſt be correct, and the deſire of aſcending perpetual: they muſt reckon the degrees they have already attained as nothing: counting nothing done while any thing remains undone. Every grace muſt be kept in exerciſe, conqueſts once made over an evil propenſity muſt not only be maintained but extended. And in truth, Chriſtianity ſo compriſes contrary, and as it may be thought irreconcileable excellencies, that thoſe which

which ſeem ſo incompatible as to be incapable by nature of being inmates of the ſame breaſt, are almoſt neceſſarily involved in the Chriſtian character.

For inſtance; Chriſtianity requires that our faith be at once fervent and ſober; that our love be both ardent and laſting; that our patience be not only heroic but gentle; ſhe demands dauntleſs zeal and genuine humility; active ſervices and complete ſelf-renunciation; high attainments in goodneſs, with deep conſciouſneſs of defect; courage in reproving, and meekneſs in bearing reproof; a quick perception of what is ſinful, with a willingneſs to forgive the offender; active virtue ready to *do* all, and paſſive virtue ready to *bear* all.—We muſt ſtretch every faculty in the ſervice of our Lord, and yet bring every thought into obedience to Him: while we aim to live in the exerciſe of every Chriſtian grace, we muſt account ourſelves unprofitable ſervants: we muſt *ſtrive* for the crown, yet receive it as a *gift*, and then lay it at our maſter's feet: while we are buſily trading in the world with our Lord's talents, we muſt "commune with our "heart, and be ſtill:" while we ſtrive to practiſe the pureſt diſintereſtedneſs, we muſt be contented though we meet with ſelfiſhneſs in return; and while laying out our lives for the good of mankind, we muſt ſubmit to reproach without murmuring, and to ingratitude without reſentment. And to render us equal to all theſe ſervices,

vices, Chriſtianity beſtows not only the precept, but the power; ſhe does what the great poet of Ethics lamented that Reaſon could not do, "ſhe lends us arms as well as rules."

For here, if not only the worldly and the timid, but the humble and the well-diſpoſed, ſhould demand with fear and trembling, "Who "is ſufficient for theſe things?" Revelation makes its own reviving anſwer, "My grace is "ſufficient for thee."

It will be well here to diſtinguiſh that there are two ſorts of Chriſtian profeſſors, one of which affect to ſpeak of Chriſtianity as if it were a mere ſyſtem of doctrines, with little reference to their influence on life and manners; while the other conſider it as exhibiting a ſcheme of human duties independent on its doctrines. For though the latter ſort may admit the doctrines, yet they contemplate them as a ſeparate and diſconnected ſet of opinions, rather than as an influential principle of action.—In violation of that beautiful harmony which ſubſiſts in every part of Scripture between practice and belief, the religious world furniſhes two ſorts of people who ſeem to enliſt themſelves, as if in oppoſition, under the banners of Saint Paul and Saint James, as if thoſe two great champions of the Chriſtian cauſe had fought for two maſters. Thoſe who affect reſpectively to be the diſciples of each, treat faith and works as if they were oppoſite intereſts, inſtead of inſeparable points.

Nay,

Nay, they go farther, and ſet Saint Paul at variance with himſelf.

Now, inſtead of reaſoning on the point, let us refer to the Apoſtle in queſtion, who himſelf definitively ſettles the diſpute. The Apoſtolical order and method in this reſpect deſerve notice and imitation: for it is obſervable that the earlier parts of moſt of the epiſtles abound in the *doctrines* of Chriſtianity, while thoſe latter chapters, which wind up the ſubject, exhibit all the *duties* which grow out of them, as the natural and neceſſary productions of ſuch a living root. But this alternate mention of doctrine and practice, which ſeemed likely to *unite*, has on the contrary formed a ſort of line of ſeparation between theſe two orders of believers, and introduced a broken and mutilated ſyſtem. Thoſe who would make Chriſtianity conſiſt of doctrines only, dwell, for inſtance, on the firſt eleven chapters of the Epiſtle to the Romans, as containing excluſively the ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel. While the mere moraliſts, who wiſh to ſtrip Chriſtianity of her lofty and appropriate attributes, delight to dwell on the *twelfth* chapter, which is a table of duties, as excluſively as if the preceding chapters made no part of the ſacred Canon. But Paul himſelf, who was at leaſt as ſound a theologian as any of his commentators, ſettles the matter another way, by making the duties of the twelfth grow out of the doctrines of the antecedent *eleven*, juſt as any other conſequence grows

grows out of its cauſe. And as if he ſuſpected that the indiviſible union between them might poſſibly be overlooked, he links the two diſtinct diviſions together by a logical "therefore," with which the twelfth begins:—"I beſeech you *therefore*," (that is, as the effect of all I have been inculcating,) "that you preſent your bodies a living "ſacrifice, acceptable to God," &c. and then goes on to enforce on them, as a conſequence of what he had been preaching, the practice of every Chriſtian virtue. This combined view of the ſubject ſeems on the one hand, to be the only means of preventing the ſubſtitution of Pagan morality for Chriſtian holineſs; and, on the other, of ſecuring the leading doctrine of juſtification by faith, from the dreadful danger of Antinomian licentiouſneſs; every human obligation being thus grafted on the living ſtock of a divine principle.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XX.

On the duty and efficacy of prayer.

IT is not propoſed to enter largely on a topic which has been exhauſted by the ableſt pens. But as a work of this nature ſeems to require that ſo important a ſubject ſhould not be overlooked, it is intended to notice in a ſlight manner a few of thoſe many difficulties and popular objections which are brought forward againſt the uſe and efficacy of prayer, even by thoſe who would be unwilling to be ſuſpected of impiety and unbelief.

There is a claſs of objectors who ſtrangely profeſs to withhold homage from the Moſt High, not out of contempt, but reverence. They affect to conſider the uſe of prayer as derogatory from the omniſcience of God, aſſerting that it looks as if we thought he ſtood in need of being informed of our wants; and as derogatory from his goodneſs, as implying that he needs to be put in mind of them.

But is it not enough for ſuch poor frail beings as we are to know, that God himſelf does not conſider prayer as derogatory either to his wiſdom or goodneſs? And ſhall *we* erect ourſelves into

into judges of what is consistent with the attributes of HIM before whom angels fall prostrate with self-abasement? Will he thank such defenders of his attributes, who, while they profess to reverence, scruple not to disobey him? It ought rather to be viewed as a great encouragement to prayer, that we are addressing a Being, who knows our wants better than we can express them, and whose preventing goodness is always ready to relieve them.

It is objected by another class, and on the specious ground of humility too, though we do not always find the objector himself quite as humble as his plea would be thought, that it is arrogant in such insignificant beings as we are to presume to lay our petty necessities before the Great and Glorious God, who cannot be expected to condescend to the multitude of trifling and even interfering requests which are brought before him by his creatures. These and such like objections arise from mean and unworthy thoughts of the Great Creator. It seems as if those who make them considered the Most High as "such an one as themselves;" a Being, who can perform a certain given quantity of business, but who would be overpowered with an additional quantity. Or, at best, is it not considering the Almighty in the light, not of an infinite God, but of a great man, of a minister, or a king, who, while he superintends great and national concerns, is obliged to neglect small and individual

individual petitions, becauſe his hands being full, he cannot ſpare that leiſure and attention which ſuffice for every thing? They do not conſider him as that infinitely glorious Being, who, while he beholds at once all that is doing in heaven and in earth, is at the ſame time as attentive to the prayer of the poor deſtitute, as preſent to the ſorrowful ſighing of the priſoner, ar if each of theſe forlorn creatures were individually the object of his undivided attention.

Theſe critics, who are for ſparing the Supreme Being the trouble of our prayers, and, if I may ſo ſpeak without profaneneſs, would relieve Omnipotence of part of his burden, by aſſigning to his care only ſuch a portion as may be more eaſily managed, ſeem to have no adequate conception of his attributes.

They forget that infinite wiſdom puts him as eaſily within reach of all knowledge, as infinite power does of all performance; that he is a Being in whoſe plans complexity makes no difficulty, variety no obſtruction, and multiplicity no confuſion; that to ubiquity diſtance does not exiſt; that to infinity ſpace is annihilated; that paſt, preſent, and future, are diſcerned more accurately at one glance of His eye, to whom a thouſand years are as one day, than a ſingle moment of time or a ſingle point of ſpace can be by ours.

To the other part of the objection, founded on the ſuppoſed interference (that is, irreconcileableneſs)

cileableneſs) of one man's petitions with thoſe of another, this anſwer ſeems to ſuggeſt itſelf: firſt, that we muſt take care that when we aſk, we do not "aſk amiſs;" that, for inſtance, we aſk chiefly, and in an unqualified manner, only for ſpiritual bleſſings to ourſelves and others; and in doing this the prayer of one man *cannot* interfere with that of another, becauſe no proportion of ſanctity or virtue implored by one obſtructs the ſame attainments in another. Next, in acting for temporal and inferior bleſſings, we muſt *qualify* our petition, even though it ſhould extend to deliverance from the ſevereſt pains, or to our very life itſelf, according to that example of our Saviour: "Father, *if it be poſſible*, let "this cup paſs from me. *Nevertheleſs*, *not my* "*will*, but thine, be done." By thus qualifying our prayer, we exerciſe ourſelves in an act of reſignation to God; we profeſs not to wiſh what will interfere with his benevolent plan, and yet we may hope by prayer to ſecure the bleſſing ſo far as it is conſiſtent with it. Perhaps the reaſon why this objection to prayer is ſo ſtrongly felt, is the too great diſpoſition to pray for merely temporal and worldly bleſſings, and to deſire them in the moſt unqualified manner, not ſubmitting to be without them, even though the granting them ſhould be inconſiſtent with the general plan of Providence.

Another claſs continue to bring forward, as pertinaciouſly as if it had never been anſwered, the

the exhauſted argument, that ſeeing God is immutable, no petitions of ours can ever change Him: that events themſelves being ſettled in a fixed and unalterable courſe, and bound in a fatal neceſſity, it is folly to think that we can diſturb the eſtabliſhed laws of the univerſe, or interrupt the courſe of Providence by our prayers: and that it is abſurd to ſuppoſe theſe firm decrees can be reverſed by any requeſts of ours.

Without entering into the wide and trackleſs field of fate and free will, from which purſuit I am kept back equally by the moſt profound ignorance and the moſt invincible diſlike, I would only obſerve, that theſe objections apply equally to all human actions as well as to prayer. It may therefore with the ſame propriety be urged, that ſeeing God is immutable and his decrees unalterable, therefore our *actions* can produce no change in Him or in our own ſtate. Weak as well as impious reaſoning! It may be queſtioned whether even the modern French and German philoſophers might not be prevailed upon to acknowledge the exiſtence of God, if they might make ſuch a uſe of his attributes. The truth is, and it is a truth diſcoverable without any depth of learning, all theſe objections are the offspring of *pride*. Poor, ſhort-ſighted man cannot reconcile the omniſcience and decrees of God with the efficacy of prayer; and becauſe *he* cannot reconcile them, he modeſtly concludes they are irreconcileable. How much more

more wiſdom as well as happineſs reſults from an humble Chriſtian ſpirit! Such a plain practical text as, "Draw near unto God, and he "will draw near unto you," carries more conſolation, more true knowledge of his wants and their remedy to the heart of a penitent ſinner, than all the "tomes of caſuiſtry" which have puzzled the world ever ſince the queſtion was firſt ſet afloat by its original propounders.

And as the plain man only got up and walked, to prove there was ſuch a thing as motion, in anſwer to the philoſopher who, in an elaborate theory, denied it: ſo the plain Chriſtian, when he is borne down with the aſſurance that there is no efficacy in prayer, requires no better argument to repel the aſſertion than the good he finds in prayer itſelf.

All the doubts propoſed to him reſpecting God, do not ſo much affect him as this one doubt reſpecting himſelf: "If I regard iniquity "in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." For the chief doubt and difficulty of a real Chriſtian conſiſts, not ſo much in a diſtruſt of God's ability and willingneſs to anſwer the prayer of the upright, as in a diſtruſt of his own uprightneſs, as in a doubt whether he himſelf belongs to that deſcription of perſons to whom the promiſes are made, and of the quality of the prayer which he offers up.

Let the ſubjects of a dark fate maintain a ſullen, or the ſlaves of a blind chance a hopeleſs

ſilence, but let the child of a compaſſionate Almighty Father ſupplicate His mercies with an humble confidence, inſpired by the aſſurance, that "the very hairs of his head are numbered." Let him take comfort in that individual and minute attention, without which not a ſparrow falls to the ground, as well as in that heart-cheering promiſe, that as "the eyes of the Lord are over "the righteous," ſo are "his ears open to their "prayers." And as a pious Biſhop has obſerved, "Our Saviour has as it were hedged in "and incloſed the Lord's prayer with theſe two "great fences of our faith, God's *willingneſs* "and his *power* to help us:" the preface to it aſſures us of the one, which, by calling God by the tender name of "Our Father," intimates his *readineſs* to help his children: and the animating concluſion, "Thine is the *power*," reſcues us from every unbelieving doubt of his *ability* to help us.

A Chriſtian knows, becauſe he feels, that prayer is, though in a way to him inſcrutable, the medium of connexion between God and his rational creatures; the means appointed by him to draw down his bleſſings upon us. The Chriſtian knows that prayer is the appointed means of uniting two ideas, one of the higheſt magnificence, the other of the moſt profound lowlineſs, within the compaſs of imagination; namely, that it is the link of communication between "the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity,"

nity," and that heart of the "contrite in which "he delights to dwell." He knows that this inexplicable union between Beings ſo unſpeakably, ſo eſſentially different, can only be maintained by prayer; that this is the ſtrong but ſecret chain which unites time with eternity, earth with Heaven, man with God.

The plain Chriſtian, as was before obſerved, cannot explain why it is ſo; but while he *feels* the efficacy, he is contented to let the learned *define* it; and he will no more poſtpone prayer till he can produce a chain of reaſoning on the manner in which he derives benefit from it, than he will poſtpone eating till he can give a ſcientific lecture on the nature of digeſtion: he is contented with knowing that his meat has nouriſhed him; and he leaves to the philoſopher, who may chooſe to defer his meal till he has elaborated his treatiſe, to ſtarve in the interim. The Chriſtian feels better than he is able to explain, that the functions of his ſpiritual life can no more be carried on without habitual prayer, than thoſe of his natural life without frequent bodily nouriſhment. He feels renovation and ſtrength grow out of the uſe of the appointed means, as neceſſarily in the one caſe as in the other. He feels that the health of his ſoul can no more be ſuſtained, and its powers kept in continued vigour by the *prayers* of a diſtant day, than his body by the *aliment* of a diſtant day.

But there is one motive to the duty in queſtion, far more conſtraining to the true believer than all others that can be named; more imperious than any argument on its utility, than any convictions of its efficacy, even than any experience of its conſolations. *Prayer is the command of God*; the plain, poſitive, repeated injunction of the Moſt High, who declares, "He will be inquired of." This is enough to ſecure the obedience of the Chriſtian, even though a promiſe were not, as it always is, attached to the command. But in this caſe, to our unſpeakable comfort, the promiſe is as clear as the precept: "*Aſk*, and ye ſhall *receive*:"—"*Seek*, and ye ſhall *find*:—Knock, and it ſhall "be opened unto you." This is encouragement enough for the plain Chriſtian. As to the *manner* in which prayer is made to coincide with the general ſcheme of God's plan in the government of human affairs; how God has left himſelf at liberty to reconcile our prayer with his own predetermined will, the Chriſtian does not very critically examine, his preciſe and immediate duty being to pray, and not to examine; and probably this being among the "ſe-"cret things which belong to God," and not to us, it will lie hidden among thoſe numberleſs myſteries which we ſhall not fully underſtand till faith is loſt in ſight.

In

In the mean time it is enough for the humble believer to be assured, that the Judge of all the earth is doing right: it is enough for him to be assured in that word of God "which cannot lie," of numberless actual instances of the efficacy of prayer in obtaining blessings and averting calamities, both national and individual: it is enough for him to be convinced experimentally, by that internal evidence which is perhaps paramount to all other evidence, the comfort he himself has received from prayer when all other comforts have failed:—and above all to end with the same motive with which we began, the only motive indeed which *he* requires for the performance of any duty,—it is motive enough for him,—that *thus saith the Lord.* For when a serious Christian has once got a plain unequivocal command from his Maker on any point, he never suspends his obedience while he is amusing himself with looking about for subordinate motives of action. Instead of curiously analysing the nature of the duty, he considers how he shall best fulfil it: for on these points at least it may be said without controversy, that "the ignorant (and here who is *not* ignorant?) *have* "*nothing to do with the law but to obey it.*"

Others there are, who, perhaps not controverting any of these premises, yet neglect to build practical consequences on the admission of them; who neither denying the duty nor the efficacy

efficacy of prayer, yet go on to live either in the irregular obſervance or the total neglect of it, as appetite, or pleaſure, or buſineſs, or humour, may happen to predominate; and who by living almoſt without prayer, may be ſaid "to live almoſt without God in the world." To ſuch we can only ſay, that they little know what they loſe. The time is haſtening on when they will look upon thoſe bleſſings as invaluable, which now they think not worth aſking for; when they will bitterly regret the abſence of thoſe means and opportunities, which now they either neglect or deſpiſe. "O that they were "wiſe! that they underſtood this! that they "would conſider their latter end!"

There are again others, who it is to be feared, having once lived in the habit of prayer, yet not having been well-grounded in thoſe principles of faith and repentance on which genuine prayer is built, have by degrees totally diſcontinued it. "They do not find," ſay they, "that their affairs proſper the better or the "worſe; or perhaps they were unſucceſsful in "their affairs even before they dropt the prac-"tice, and ſo had no encouragement to go on." They do not *know* that they had no encouragement; they do not *know* how much worſe their affairs might have gone on, had they diſcontinued it ſooner, or how their prayers helped to retard their ruin. Or they do not *know* that perhaps

haps "they aſked amiſs," or that, if they had obtained what they aſked, they might have been far more unhappy. For a true believer never "reſtrains prayer," becauſe he is not certain he obtains every individual requeſt; for he is perſuaded that God, in compaſſion to our ignorance, ſometimes in great mercy withholds what we deſire, and often diſappoints his moſt favoured children by giving them, not what they aſk, but what he knows is really good for them. The froward child, as a pious prelate* obſerves, cries for the ſhining blade, which the tender parent withholds, knowing it would cut his fingers.

Thus to perſevere when we have not the encouragement of viſible ſucceſs, is an evidence of tried faith. Of this holy perſeverance Job was a noble inſtance. Defeat and diſappointment rather ſtimulated than ſtopped *his* prayers. Though in a vehement ſtrain of paſſionate eloquence he exclaims, "I cry out of wrong, but "I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no "judgment:" yet ſo perſuaded was he notwithſtanding of the duty of continuing this holy importunity, that he perſiſted againſt all human hope, till he attained to that exalted pitch of unſhaken faith, by which he was enabled to break out into that ſublime apoſtrophe, "Though "he ſlay me, I will truſt in him!"

But

* Biſhop Hall.

But may we not ſay that there is a conſiderable claſs, who not only bring none of the objections which we have ſtated againſt the uſe of prayer; who are ſo far from rejecting, that they are exact and regular in the performance of it; who yet take it up on as low ground as is conſiſtent with their ideas of their own ſafety; who, while they conſider prayer as an indiſpenſable form, believe nothing of that change of heart and of thoſe holy tempers which it is intended to produce? Many who yet adhere ſcrupulouſly to the letter, are ſo far from entering into the ſpirit of this duty, that they are ſtrongly inclined to ſuſpect thoſe of hypocriſy who adopt the true ſcriptural views of prayer. Nay, as even the Bible may be ſo wreſted as to be made to ſpeak almoſt any language in ſupport of almoſt any opinion, theſe perſons lay hold on Scripture itſelf to bear them out in their own ſlight views of this duty; and they profeſs to borrow from thence the ground of that cenſure which they caſt on the more ſerious Chriſtians. Among the many paſſages which have been made to convey a meaning foreign to their original deſign, none have been ſeized upon with more avidity by ſuch perſons than the pointed cenſures of our Saviour on thoſe "who for a pre-"tence make long prayers;" as well as on thoſe "who uſe vain repetitions, and think they ſhall "be heard for much ſpeaking." Now the things

things here intended to be reproved, were the hypocriſy of the Phariſees and the ignorance of the heathen, together with the error of all thoſe who depended on the ſucceſs of their prayers, while they imitated the deceit of the one or the folly of the other. But our Saviour never meant thoſe ſevere reprehenſions ſhould cool or abridge the devotion of pious Chriſtians, to which they do not at all apply.

More or few words, however, ſo little conſtitute the true value of prayer, that there is no doubt but one of the moſt affecting ſpecimens on record is the ſhort petition of the Publican; full fraught as it is with that ſpirit of contrition and ſelf-abaſement which is the very principle and ſoul of prayer. And this ſpecimen perhaps is the beſt model for that ſudden lifting up of the heart which we call ejaculation. But I doubt, in general, whether thoſe few haſty words to which theſe frugal petitioners would ſtint the ſcanty devotions of others and themſelves, will be always found ample enough to ſatisfy the humble penitent, who, being a ſinner, has much to confeſs; who, hoping he is a pardoned ſinner, has much to acknowledge. Such an one perhaps cannot always pour out the fulneſs of his ſoul within the preſcribed abridgments. Even the ſincereſt Chriſtian, when he wiſhes to find his heart warm, has often to lament its coldneſs. Though he feel that he has

has received much, and has therefore much to be thankful for, yet he is not able at once to bring his wayward ſpirit into ſuch a poſture as ſhall fit it for the ſolemn buſineſs; for ſuch an one has not merely his form to repeat, but he has his tempers to reduce to order, his affections to excite, and his peace to make. His thoughts may be realizing the ſarcaſm of the Prophet on the Idol Baal, "they may be gone a "journey," and muſt be recalled; his heart perhaps "ſleepeth, and muſt be awaked." A devout ſupplicant too will labour to affect and warm his mind with a ſenſe of the great and gracious attributes of God, in imitation of the holy men of old. Like Jehoſaphat, he will ſometimes enumerate "the power, and the "might, and the mercies of the Moſt High," in order to ſtir up the ſentiments of awe, and gratitude, and love, and humility in his own ſoul*. He has the example of his Saviour, whoſe heart dilated with the expreſſion of the ſame holy affections. "I thank thee, O Fa-"ther, Lord of heaven and earth." A heart thus animated, thus warmed with divine love, cannot always ſcrupulouſly limit itſelf to the mere *buſineſs* of prayer, if I may ſo ſpeak. It cannot content itſelf with merely ſpreading out its own neceſſities, but expands in contemplating

* 2 Chron. xx. 5, 6.

ing the perfections of Him to whom he is addreſſing them. The humble ſupplicant, though he be no longer *governed* by a love of the world, yet grieves to find that he cannot totally exclude it from his thoughts. Though he has on the whole a deep ſenſe of his own wants, and of God's abundant fulneſs to ſupply them, yet when he moſt wiſhes to be rejoicing in thoſe ſtrong motives for love and gratitude, alas! even then he has to mourn his worldlineſs, his inſenſibility, his deadneſs. He has to deplore the littleneſs and vanity of the objects which are even then drawing away his heart from his Redeemer. The beſt Chriſtian is but too liable, during the temptations of the day, to be enſnared by "the luſt of the eye, and the pride of "life," and is not always brought without effort to reflect that he is but duſt and aſhes. How can even good perſons, who are juſt come perhaps from liſtening to the flattery of their fellow-worms, acknowledge before God, without any preparation of the heart, that they are miſerable ſinners? They require a little time, to impreſs on their own ſouls the truth of that ſolemn confeſſion of ſin they are making to Him, without which brevity and not length might conſtitute hypocriſy. Even the ſincerely pious have in prayer grievous wanderings to lament, from which others miſtakingly ſuppoſe the advanced Chriſtian to be exempt. Such wanderings

ings that, as an old divine has obſerved, it would exceedingly humble a good man, could he, after he had prayed, be made to ſee his prayers written down, with exact interlineations of all the vain and impertinent thoughts which had thruſt themſelves in amongſt them. So that ſuch an one will indeed, from a deep ſenſe of theſe diſtractions, feel deep occaſion with the prophet to aſk forgiveneſs for "the iniquity of his *holy* "things:" and would find cauſe enough for humiliation every night, had he to lament the ſins of his prayers only.

We know that ſuch a brief petition as, "Lord help my unbelief," if the ſupplicant be in ſo happy a frame, and the prayer be darted up with ſuch ſtrong faith that his very ſoul mounts with the petition, may ſuffice to draw down a bleſſing which may be withheld from the more prolix petitioner: yet, if by prayer we do not mean a mere form of words, whether they be long or ſhort; if the true definition of prayer be, that it is *the deſire of the heart*; if it be that ſecret communion between God and the ſoul which is the very breath and being of religion; then is the Scripture ſo far from ſuggeſting that ſhort meaſure of which it is accuſed, that it expreſsly ſays, "Pray without ceaſing:"—"Pray evermore:"—"I will that men pray "every where:"—"Continue inſtant in "prayer."

If

If ſuch "repetitions" as theſe objectors reprobate, ſtir up deſires as yet unawakened, or protract affections already excited; for "*vain* "repetitions" are ſuch as awaken or expreſs no new deſire, and ſerve no religious purpoſe, then are "repetitions" not to be condemned. And if it be true that our Saviour gave the warning "againſt long prayers" in the ſenſe theſe objectors allege; if he gave the caution againſt vain repetitions in the ſenſe theſe believe; then he broke his own rule in both inſtances: for once we are told "he continued *all night* in prayer to "God." And again, in a moſt awful criſis of his life, it is expreſsly ſaid, "He prayed "the *third time*, uſing the *ſame words**."

But as it is the effect of prayer to *expand* the affections as well as to *ſanctify* them, the benevolent Chriſtian is not ſatisfied to commend himſelf alone to the divine favour. The heart which is full of the love of God, will overflow with love to its neighbour. All that are near to himſelf he wiſhes to bring near to God. He will preſent the whole human race as objects of the divine compaſſion, but eſpecially the faithful followers of Jeſus Chriſt. Religion makes a man ſo liberal of ſoul, that he cannot endure to reſtrict any thing, much leſs divine mercies, to himſelf: he therefore ſpiritualizes the

* Matt. xxvi. 44.

the ſocial affections, by adding interceſſory to perſonal prayer: for he knows, that petitioning for others is one of the beſt methods of exerciſing and enlarging our own love and charity, even if it were not to draw down thoſe bleſſings which are promiſed to thoſe for whom we aſk them. It is unneceſſary to produce any of the numberleſs inſtances with which Scripture abounds, on the efficacy of interceſſion: I ſhall confine myſelf to a few obſervations on the benefits it brings to him who offers it.—When we pray for the objects of our deareſt regard, it purifies paſſion, and exalts love into religion: when we pray for thoſe with whom we have worldly intercourſe, it ſmooths down the ſwellings of envy, and bids the tumults of anger and ambition ſubſide: when we pray for our country, it ſanctifies patriotiſm: when we pray for thoſe in authority, it adds a divine motive to human obedience: when we pray for our enemies, it ſoftens the ſavageneſs of war, and mollifies hatred into tenderneſs, and reſentment into ſorrow. And we can beſt learn, nay, we can only learn, the difficult duty of forgiving thoſe who have offended us, when we bring ourſelves to pray for them to Him whom we ourſelves daily offend. When thoſe who are the faithful followers of the ſame Divine Maſter pray for

for each other, the reciprocal interceſſion beſt realizes that beautiful idea of "the Commu-"nion of Saints."

Some are for confining their interceſſions only to the good, as if none but perſons of merit were entitled to our prayers. Merit! who has it? Deſert! who can plead it? in the ſight of God, I mean. Who ſhall bring his own piety, or the piety, of others, in the way of *claim*, before a Being of ſuch tranſcendant holineſs, that the heavens are not clean in his "ſight?" And if we wait for perfect holineſs as a preliminary to prayer, when ſhall ſuch erring creatures pray *at all* to HIM "who chargeth the Angels with "folly!"

In cloſing this little work with the ſubject of interceſſory prayer, may the Author be allowed to avail herſelf of the feeling it ſuggeſts to her own heart? And while ſhe earneſtly implores that Being, who can make the meaneſt of his creatures inſtrumental to his glory, to bleſs this humble attempt to thoſe for whom it was written, may ſhe, without preſumption, entreat that this work of Chriſtian Charity may be reciprocal, and that thoſe who purſue theſe pages may put up a petition for her, that in the great day to which we are all haſtening, ſhe may not be found to have ſuggeſted to others what ſhe herſelf

herſelf did not believe, or to have recommended what ſhe did not deſire to practiſe? In that awful day of everlaſting deciſion, may both the reader and the writer be pardoned and accepted, "not for any works of righte-"ouſneſs which they have done," but through the merits of the GREAT INTERCESSOR.

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THE END.